Commentary
September 2000

Holocaust Reparations—A Growing Scandal

Gabriel Schoenfeld

What Is Wrong with Gay Marriage

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Peace for Our Time?

Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan

Yes and No to Gun Control

Gary Rosen

Wandering Jews—and Their Genes

Hillel Halkin

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Selling Norman Rockwell

Steven C. Munson

Books in Review

Chester E. Finn, Jr. • *Mark Falcoff* • *Jonathan Marks*
Ronald Radosh • *Franklin Hunt* • *Dan Seligman*

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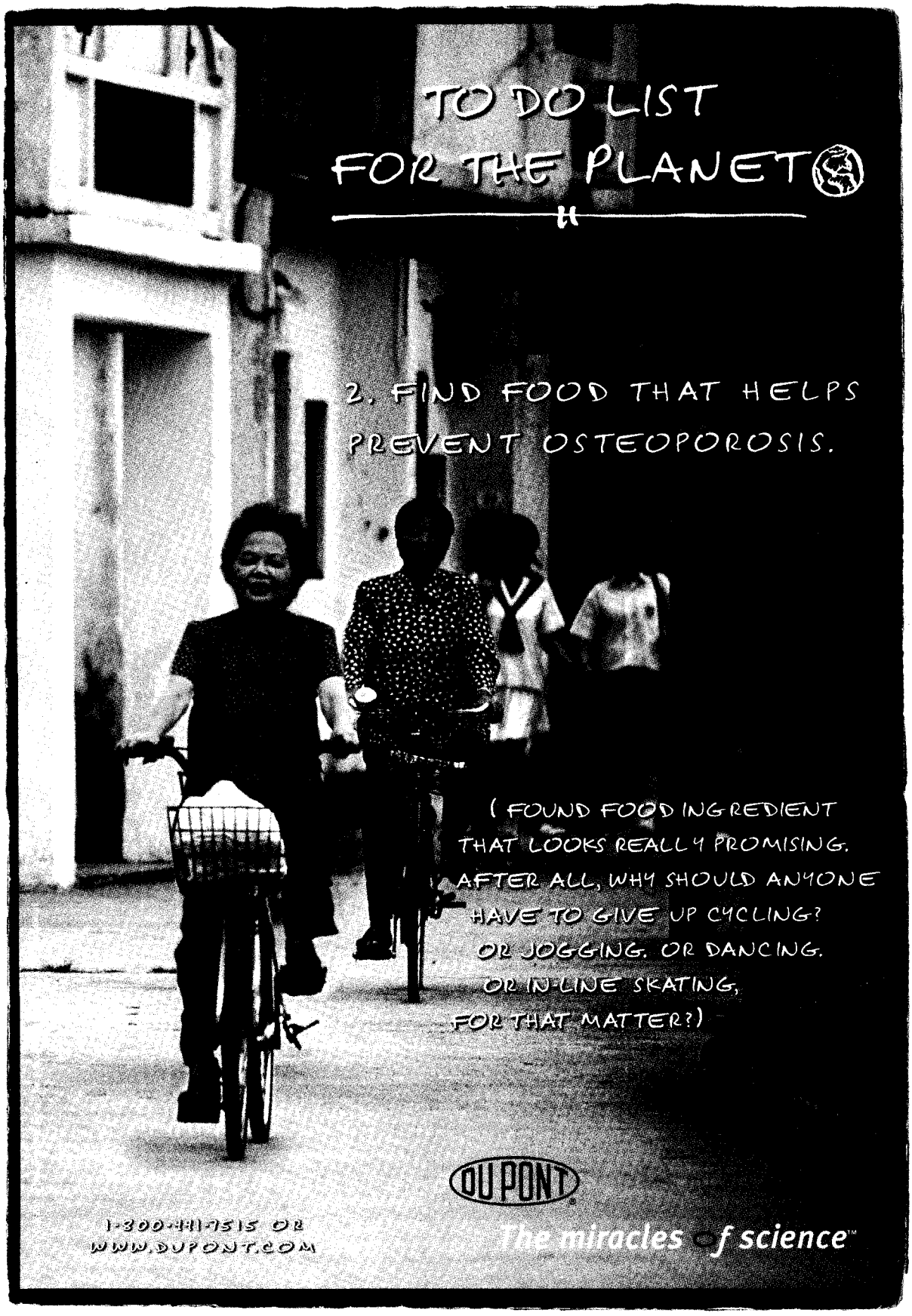

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Commentary

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September 2000

Letters from Readers

DNA

To the Editor:

I enjoyed Arthur B. Cody's article ["Messages from the Genome," June], but I was a little puzzled by its tone. Although he seemed to agree with my book *Genome* in every particular, he nonetheless conveyed an impression of fairly strong criticism. So let me simply comment that my book is very much *not* one that claims "we now know" everything or that "ignorance is rapidly evaporating." Far from it: I believe that the more we discover in the genome, the more we realize we do not know. Science is the process of discovering new mysteries, and the genome is a fertile source of those mysteries.

Matt Ridley
Newcastle Upon Tyne
England

To the Editor:

Arthur B. Cody decries genetic engineering because we will not know the results until it is too late. I sympathize with his plea for caution, but I cannot endorse the adoption of his all-or-nothing argument. Just as ether has been used successfully for decades as an anesthetic even though we do not know how it works, so it is possible to use our knowledge of the effects of a particular regulatory gene or molecule on the cascade of protein-signaling between genes without understanding the entire genetic process.

Consider, for example, the *Rx* gene, one of several identified as necessary for mammalian eye development. If this particular gene is not active (that is, functionally dominant), eyes and bony sockets do not develop. Were this a widespread human malady, we would not need to know every bit of the signal-transduction pathway that produces these structures in order to attempt to reverse eye loss through *Rx* gene manipulation.

Mr. Cody maintains that, since the number of genes involved in the development of an organism is enormous, the number of possible developmental end-products is virtually limitless—another reason that genetic manipulation can be dangerous, especially if done at the gametic level. This sounds reasonable, but a survey of multicellular life demonstrates that repetition of form, not unabated novelty, is the rule. Even though an organism may have a vast number of identifiable genes, only 200 or fewer are indispensable in embryonic development.

Nevertheless, Mr. Cody defends his position by asserting that, because the genome "operates in an environment of such freedom . . . at every point, its alternative viable courses are virtually infinite." This might appear to make sense when talking, as he does, about differences among individuals in the proximity of stomach to sternum. But it is not relevant at the level of development that creates novel morphologies or behaviors: that is, the stuff of new species.

Novelty derives from changes in the activation, timing, and spatial relationships of regulatory genes and their products—which, contrary to Mr. Cody's assertion, do interact across cell boundaries. Variability in stomach-to-sternum positioning is not the same as *having* a stomach and a sternum. Too often, variability is seen as a requisite of evolution. It is not. Variation of a feature is only manifest after the novelty has become established and slight differences in structural gene expression emerge among individuals.

We may never know how the genome works in every minute detail, but if discoveries in developmental genetics are to have broader application than the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity, their judicious use in helping to ameliorate the human condition is mandatory.

Jeffrey H. Schwartz
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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TO THE EDITOR:

I found Arthur B. Cody's "Messages from the Genome" very interesting. He does a good job of describing what is known in a way that can be understood by the intelligent layperson, and he poses some important and provocative questions.

My view differs from Mr. Cody's in several respects, however. It is quite easy for me to imagine where the genome derives its—and our—complexity. First, our different genomes do not simply contain 100,000 identical sets of genes, encoding 100,000 identical proteins. Instead, each of us can inherit one of several sequence varieties at each gene site, and those varieties change the code just enough to direct the synthesis of proteins with significantly altered functions. Changes in a single nucleotide of a single gene can lead to devastating inherited illnesses like cystic fibrosis and affect such traits as one's susceptibility to cancer or propensity for addictive behavior. To make matters even more complex, many genes give rise to several different proteins; in the most striking example, one gene is known to encode 1,000 different protein entities.

Nor do our genes function simply in an "on" or "off" state. Each cell regulates the levels of all 100,000 genes individually, according to cell-fate decisions made early in the process of development, but also in rapid-fire, real time, enabling us to respond to a changing environment. Nutrition, stress, DNA damage, injury, hormonal fluctuations, and many other factors influence gene expression and protein levels in our cells. The levels at which each gene is expressed—on, off, higher, slightly lower—are controlled by regulatory DNA sequences, and we can carry different functional versions of those sequences, too. The unique selection of different choices or combinations of choices among 100,000 genes provides plenty of opportunity for complexity.

At present, the protein-coding sequences are all that we understand (and even those, just partially), so that is the subject everyone talks about. But it is the gene-regulation machinery, and the self-regulatory/interactive mechanisms built into RNA's and proteins, that turn this one-dimensional code into an infinitely complex, multidimensional, living network. Information to regulate genes and proteins and to direct their complex interactions is also encoded in our genomes, but we barely understand it at all.

I agree entirely with Mr. Cody's rejection of the "blueprint" metaphor for the genetic code, which, though it can be useful, misses the real point. Our genomes do contain the plans from which each cell in our body is constructed. But this particular code also directs the creation of its own construction crew, janitorial staff, repairmen, and every piece of necessary machinery. No real scientist would tell you that this first decoding of the human genome is anywhere near the end of the story. Rather, we understand that the genome sequence is like the bare frame of a ship that can take us to the New World, which so far we have seen only in a fog and from a distance. We know all too well that the really huge and humbling tasks still lie before us.

LISA STUBBS
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
Livermore, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Arthur B. Cody provides a valuable summary of the current state of the Human Genome Project and some of its limitations. I particularly appreciate his acknowledgement of Walter Elsasser, the eminent theoretical physicist, for an understanding of the fundamental difference between physical and biological science arising from the intrinsic complexity of the organism. Elsasser was the first to analyze that complexity in quantitative terms, long preceding the current wave of interest in complexity theory.

But Mr. Cody shows he has not pursued Elsasser's biological thought far enough when he asserts the need for a "profound new idea, some tremendous leap in human understanding" before we can comprehend the essential nature of the living state. In his last book, Elsasser proposed three basic principles for moving toward a theory of organisms. The third of these principles postulates that the information transfer in organisms is dualistic, consisting of both the familiar engraving in a molecule (DNA) and a kind of holistic memory involving the entire apparatus of the cell. He described the latter as memory without storage in macromolecules, and applied it to the transmission of information over time in the brain as well as to the reproduction of cells and organisms. Memory without an intervening storage device surely meets Mr. Cody's demand for a "profound new idea."

The formal and abstract nature of Elsasser's biological principles accounts for their being largely ignored by the community of biological researchers. Modern biologists consider themselves hard-nosed pragmatists interested only in experimental results that, for the most part, can be reduced to the molecular level. This form of realism contributes to the dearth of biological theory with the broad organizing power that quantum mechanics and relativity have given to physics.

The problem in biology is to find a way of bridging the gap between the technologically powerful experiments of molecular biology and the abstractions of biological theory, in order to make both more meaningful. Elsasser suggested that verification of the holistic properties of organisms requires a new methodology, one that would supplement conventional molecular reductionism with studies of the dynamics of change among intact living cells. An example that has emerged lately is the mathematical modeling which shows that the driving force in tumor development is selection of altered cells rather than their genetic destabilization.

Further interaction between theory and experiment should lead to a deeper understanding of organisms in general and ourselves in particular. Without it, genomic research risks becoming a sterile exercise.

HARRY RUBIN
University of California
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Arthur B. Cody's article on the current state of molecular biology was fascinating and clarifying, if too pes-

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Great Performers

Placido Domingo: "Se quel guerrier io fossi" from Verdi's *Aida* 1000
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simistic for my taste. I believe, however, that he has confused one fundamental concept with another. Mr. Cody writes, "In molecular biology there is something called the central dogma: one gene, one protein." But the central dogma, as first formulated by Francis Crick in 1957, says something different: that the "information" in the gene passes from DNA to RNA to protein. What Mr. Cody is referring to, I believe, is the "sequence hypothesis," which simply states that the sequence of bases in a segment of nucleic acid suffices to determine the sequence of amino acids in the corresponding protein.

As for Mr. Cody's general viewpoint—he feels that the genome is asked to do too much for its perceived capacity—maybe that is the case. But 50 years ago, the entire field was a muddle. It was clear to only a handful of researchers that the genetic material was even contained in the cell nucleus. Compared, say, to physics, molecular biology is still in its infancy. The work accomplished so far may be characterized in the words of Einstein in connection with Louis Victor de Broglie's thesis on electron waves: "He has lifted a corner of the great veil."

LESLIE KLEIN
Lexington, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

In warning of the dangers involved in gene therapy, Arthur B. Cody writes that it "is premised on the idea that . . . by locating and replacing a faulty or missing gene in an organism we can thereby effect a cure." This suggests that the new gene can be introduced at the site of the faulty or missing gene. The actual procedure, however, is much more haphazard than this, for it introduces the missing gene at random sites throughout the organism, where it may or may not be expressed. This haphazard distribution may also introduce unforeseen morbidities.

MARCO RABINOVITZ
Bethesda, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

I was intrigued by Arthur B. Cody's "Messages from the Genome." The number of different cells that theoretically can be compounded out of four fixed elements, as Mr. Cody theorizes, is extravagantly large, almost infinite. And yet, this wonderful organism keeps running. We can and do predict with great accuracy how organisms will function, just as we can predict atomic actions and the effects of gravity. But we cannot control these biological and physical phenomena. The reason we have no control, of course, is that something else does. That something can be called Natural Law or the Great Programmer. Acknowledgement of this is exactly what is missing from Mr. Cody's conclusions.

EDWARD KAPLAN
West Palm Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

Arthur B. Cody's article provides a very thoughtful caution against the excessive claims being made for the Human Genome Project. In the past few months I have heard the heads of distinguished university genetics departments list the understanding and control of human behavior among the accomplishments that will follow from this project. When I challenge them, they acknowledge that there is indeed a great difference between our understanding of the genes that control physical somatic features like eye color and our vague and primitive speculations about the role of genetics in determining human behavior.

Mr. Cody's reminder that what makes us human and individual is far more complex than some narrow-thinking scientists imply is very welcome.

JOSEPH BERGER, M.D.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

ARTHUR B. CODY writes:

I am pleased to have received thoughtful letters from such distinguished individuals. A few observations are nevertheless in order.

It is very agreeable to learn that Matt Ridley concurs with me that science is, as he puts it, "the process of discovering new mysteries." This is nowhere truer than in molecular biology, where each new discovery opens up a thousand new such mysteries. In line with this, Mr. Ridley now declares that, contrary to my stated impression, his book is "very much *not* one that claims . . . 'ignorance is rapidly evaporating.'" I must have been misled. Somehow, from passages like this one—"In just a few short years we will have moved from knowing almost nothing about our genes to knowing everything"—I got the wrong idea.

Jeffrey H. Schwartz takes me to task for an all-or-nothing argument I did not advance. Rather than suggesting that gene therapy should never, ever, be done, I caution against undertaking it without a greater understanding than the one we possess now of the way the genome works. The reason is to be seen in the universal concession that many genes must work together in building an organism. It follows that if one, even the *Rx*, is altered, there may be far-reaching and unpredictable effects, some of them deleterious.

Limited to a single volunteer, and assuming full disclosure in advance, experimentation of this kind might be morally tolerable; but if our knowledge of what we are doing is no greater than the knowledge we command of ether, manipulating at the gametic level is surely wrong. Ether's effects, after all, are not inherited.

As for Mr. Schwartz's citation of the number 200 in connection with embryological development, I fail to see its relevance; surely he is not suggesting that we can fiddle with the other 99,800 genes as much as we like so long as we leave the 200 alone. Although he grants that we may never know how the genome works in every minute detail, he understates our ignorance. We know practically *nothing* of how the genome works; minute details are a very long way off. Finally, I am of course in accord with the view that the application of developmental genetics should include "their judicious use in helping to ameliorate the human condition." The question is what judiciousness requires, and what ameliorating is.

Like Lisa Stubbs, I am aware that a single nucleotide of a single gene can produce a serious or fatal disease, and that, by "alternate splicing," a single gene can produce many different proteins. I did not know that one gene can encode as many as 1,000 different proteins, but I would have thought that this fact reinforces rather than undercuts the position I advanced.

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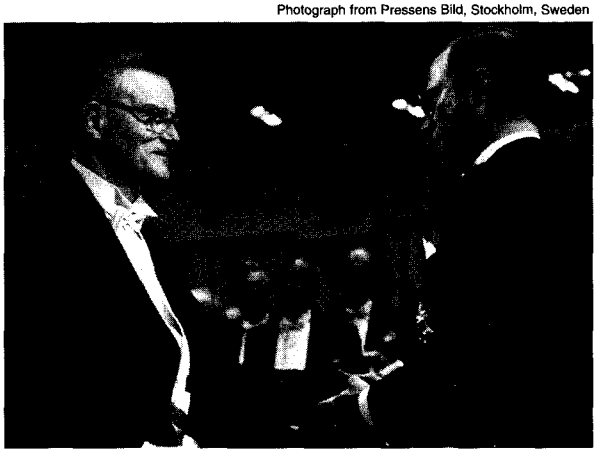

James M. Buchanan (left) receiving the Alfred Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences from Carl XVI Gustaf, king of Sweden, 1986

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The question remains: what is the agency that *selects* which protein to express at any given time? Surely it cannot be another gene-protein, and so on ad infinitum. Certain factors external to the cell prompt the selection but do not cause it; something responds to the prompting and then selects which way the gene is to go; what that something is, we know not.

A similar observation may be made concerning the point about how cells regulate gene levels. An encoding gene makes a protein or it does not; on or off. It is the level of proteins—that is, the number activated at a given time—that varies according to the factors Lisa Stubbs enumerates, but the technique by which these factors hold sway is simply mysterious. "We know all too well," she writes, "that the really huge and humbling tasks still lie before us," but the really huge and humbling task, the task that is first in importance, is to figure out how the damned thing works.

Though I share Harry Rubin's admiration for Walter Elsasser, and agree that he should be more widely read, I cannot agree that he has managed to come up with the profound new idea we are waiting for. Elsasser, as Rubin reports, speaks of "holistic memory," or memory without storage. It is a curious idea, suggesting that what in physics is impossible and makes no sense is commonplace in biology. Although the genome is informationally impoverished, the organism regains all the information required for its development, enormously more than what is available from the little piece of its parent that is passed down.

But there is nothing more to Elsasser's idea than this: no elaboration, no mathematics, no formulas, no crucial experiments. However much one agrees with his analysis, or sympathizes with his willingness to see the presence of unique principles at work, he has not discovered such a principle. Incidentally, Harry Rubin, long a sound and knowledgeable critic of complacency in biology, is himself a no less salutary voice than Elsasser's.

I confess I cannot see the source of Leslie Klein's confusion, or of what he calls my confusion. Originally it was thought that each gene produced an enzyme. Subsequently it was found that genes express not only those proteins that are enzymes but all of the body's proteins. Perfect accuracy would demand certain qualifications: the route from DNA to RNA to organelles to transportation is an elaborate one; there are some genes that do not code for proteins; in some cases one gene codes for only a part of a protein while another codes for another part and the parts get put together later; and some code for several different proteins. But it still remains true that what we do not know about all this is what we want to know most, namely, how genes construct anything

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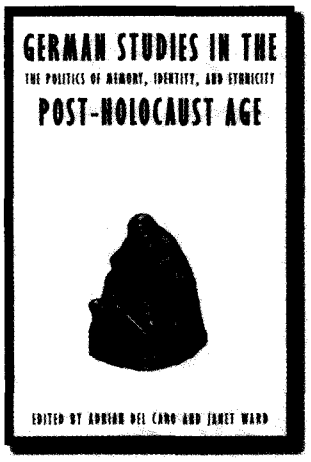

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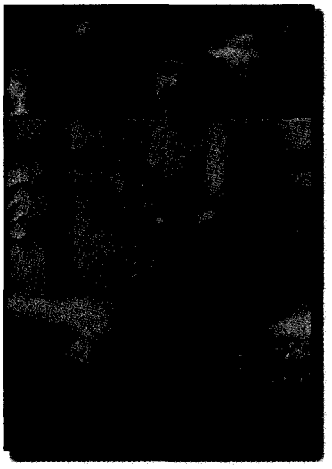

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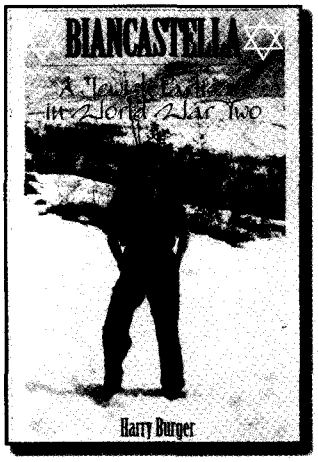

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Five years into the war, Burger crossed the Alps into Italy and joined the Partisans, a group of Italian Resistance fighters who battled the Nazis from the mountains in northwest Italy. Taking the name Biancastella, which means "white star" in Italian, Burger, along with other Resistance fighters, was able to fight back, sabotaging German operations, mounting defensive attacks, and capturing and punishing many of the Nazis who would have him dead. Despite an upbringing that ill-prepared him for life on the run, Burger successfully avoided Nazi capture through seven brutal and uncertain years of war. His is a thrilling tale of courage and survival.

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belonging to an organism. That they do so we cannot doubt, but it is not in any way like the way they make proteins. The corner of this biological curtain has been lifted, to be sure, but it is a very much bigger curtain—though microscopic in itself—than the one de Broglie and Einstein peeked under.

I thank Edward Kaplan and Joseph Berger for their comments.

Isaiah

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz ["Learning from Isaiah," May] does a creditable job of describing the origins and uses (or misuses) of the book of Isaiah, but the first lesson he learns from the biblical prophet is as wrong today as when first conceived. Mr. Podhoretz claims that the historic covenant between God and Israel preserves the Jewish people "despite the correlative cost in suffering inflicted upon them by God for their sins." Yet if suffering is the result of sin, why should Mr. Podhoretz, in a footnote, proceed to exempt the Holocaust from this logic? And what about natural disasters, or even the suffering of one innocent Jewish child? Equating suffering with sin simply blames victims for their misfortune.

The basic historical claim of Isaiah (and Mr. Podhoretz) is that God preserves the Jews; how else did they survive? But study and prayer did not feed families in the shtetls of Eastern Europe, nor did Isaiah-like messianic longing create the state of Israel. The courageous work of Jewish men and women preserved the Jewish people; they should get the credit for having "sustained us, established us, and brought us to this day." Jewish survival is a testament to their power, despite an indifferent universe and outside hostility.

ADAM CHALOM
International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism
Farmington Hills, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR:

In his essay on Isaiah, Norman Podhoretz reports the quip of an "anti-Semitic wag": "How odd of God to choose the Jews." But there was a follow-up by a noted Jewish writer whose name, regrettably, escapes me: "How odd of God to choose the Jews, / But not so odd as those who choose/ a Jewish God, but hate the Jews."

DANIEL BELL
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Unfortunately, Norman Podhoretz gives short shrift to the role played by Isaiah in saving Jerusalem from the Assyrian onslaught, a role that is still visible in the Old City.

At the beginning of the 8th century B.C.E., the northern part of Jerusalem lay unprotected. This area consisted mainly of the Mishneh quarter, a new urban center that had been formed by Jews seeking refuge from the Assyrian destruction of the northern kingdom. Isa-

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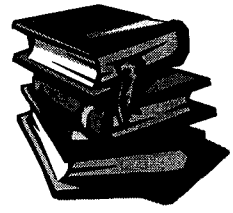

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iah advised the wavering King Hezekiah to build up the walls of the city, and reassured him that Jerusalem would not fall. Hezekiah not only strengthened the existing walls but built a new one surrounding the Mishneh quarter and joined it to the wall protecting the eastern hill, or City of David.

When the Assyrians arrived, they found a well-fortified city. Encamped outside the walls, they were struck by an infectious plague, and withdrew without ever mounting an attack.

This new wall, known as the Broad Wall, is mentioned in Nehemiah 3:8 and 12:38. Today, thanks to excavations, a section of it lies exposed in the Old City, though most tourists fail to realize its significance as a visible testament to the Zionist dedication of Isaiah.

JOSEPH I. UNGAR
West Hartford, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR:

I would add two points to Norman Podhoretz's "Learning from Isaiah." First, the scholar Harry M. Orlinsky should be given recognition for proving that the Hebrew word *almah* in Isaiah 7:14 means "young woman" rather than "virgin." In the early 1950's, Orlinsky was the only Jew invited to be on the translation committee for the (Christian) Revised Standard Version, and he was responsible for the change in the translation of this phrase from what it was in the King James version.

As for the famous passages of Isaiah 53 on the "suffering servant," it is easy to see how Christians would regard them as referring to Jesus. A few examples:

• "He was wounded because of our sins, crushed because of our iniquities. He bore the chastisement that made us whole, and by his bruises were healed."

• "He was maltreated, yet he was submissive; he did not open his mouth, like a sheep being led to the slaughter."

• "For he was cut off from the land of the living through the sin of My people, who deserved the punishment."

• "For he exposed himself to death and was numbered among the sinners, whereas he bore the guilt of the many and made intercession for sinners."

Verse 10, however, shows that the suffering servant is *not* Jesus: "But the Lord chose to crush him by disease, that, if he made himself an offering for guilt, he might see offspring and have a long life." No one has ever claimed that Jesus was diseased or that he had children and enjoyed a long life.

Who is the suffering servant? Isaiah 52 clearly speaks of Israel, and Isaiah 53 is a continuation of Isaiah 52—there is no change of subject.

LAWRENCE BRISKIN
Dayton, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR:

In his otherwise fine article, Norman Podhoretz writes about the failure of Jesus to "perform his appointed messianic task of liberating Palestine from the Romans." The problem with this statement is that there was no "Palestine" at the time represented in the New Testament.

Though this may seem an insignificant detail, it inadvertently lends support to the propaganda that the ancestors of today's "Palestinians" were around back then. I am surprised that Mr. Podhoretz would make such a slip.

DAVID BASCH
West Hartford, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz notes that some Christian theologians find a "scandal of particularity" in the doctrine of the chosen people. He understands how some might feel there is "something offensive to reason about the idea that the one true God, the creator of the universe, the God of all, should have selected a single people to carry out His will in history." Even so, Mr. Podhoretz suggests that no other hypothesis can better explain the amazing history and survival of the Jews.

I submit that the doctrine of the chosen people should be seen as neither "offensive to reason" nor a "scandal of particularity." For how *else* could God have given His free-to-choose human children the help they would need in order to make the right moral decisions while being subject to temptations of the flesh and confusions of the mind, and thrown together in tribal competition for limited material resources?

If, God must have reasoned, I can persuade *one* people to be the seed for My moral law, then maybe others will follow their example. It will not make too much difference who that people is. But they have to *want* the job, because it is going to be tough. They will have to love Me with all their hearts and all their souls and all their might.

Do Christian theologians see a "scandal of particularity" in the special status of the Society of Jesus, which regards itself as God's missionary vanguard? Should we view as scandalous the honor claimed by the U.S. Marines to be the "first to fight for right and freedom?" The point is that God knows both the individual and the social qualities of His creatures, and He also knows how ideas take root and grow. To my mind, the choice He made in selecting one people to help transmit and preserve our moral compass is neither odd nor offensive, just very practical and clever.

Finally, even if one agrees with Mr. Podhoretz that there were only two or at most three Isaiahs, future Jewish historians may well record another who has lived in our own time. I express my own deep thanks for Mr. Podhoretz's profound insights and strong, clear voice for the good of Zion and the United States over so many years.

MICHAEL BALCH
Iowa City, Iowa

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's essay on the book of Isaiah is absolutely great, in both explication and application.

As to whether Isaiah contains "prophecy" regarding Jesus, Paul makes much of such "proof" in I Corinthians 15:3—a most important text—when he says: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." This has to mean the Hebrew Bible, since the New Testament narratives were not yet in existence, and more specifically it must refer to the passages in Isaiah cited by Mr. Podhoretz.

I share Mr. Podhoretz's great admiration for the King James version, although much of what we all admire in it was actually the work of William Tyndale, who came up with a large portion of the famous phrases. Tyndale, a Catholic priest, unfortunately embraced every heresy one can name, including the denial of free will and the inef-

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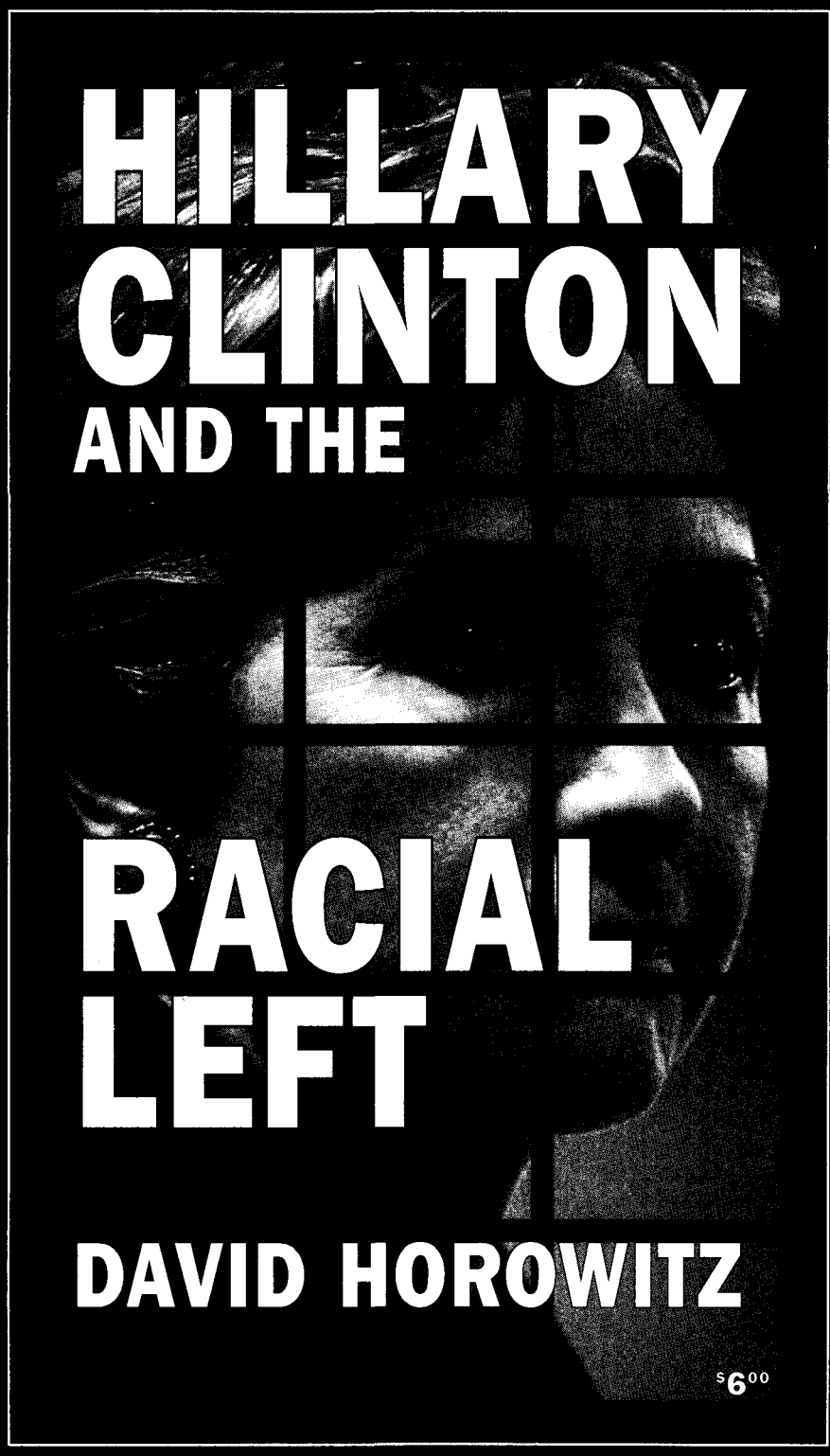

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ficacy of good works. For this he was executed by the Inquisition, which, however, had been liberalized by that time: they strangled him before burning him.

JEFFREY HART
Lyme, New Hampshire

TO THE EDITOR:

"Learning from Isaiah" is probably the best article I have ever read. While Christianity has used Isaiah to show that every detail of Jesus' life was prophesied, Mr. Podhoretz gives us the necessary context and background to understand the prophet fully, and also to find in him important lessons for a 21st-century world where idol-worship has reached frightful proportions.

FRANCIS JACOBSON
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR:

The message of "Learning from Isaiah" should be delivered to every person who seeks understanding of fundamental spiritual issues and their practical implications.

HERMAN M. STURM
Silver Spring, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

How exquisitely done, and trenchantly explored, is Norman Podhoretz's "Learning from Isaiah," in which the discrepancies between the first Isaiah and the second/third Isaiah are reconciled in Zion. It is a beautiful contribution to learning—and faith.

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.
New York City

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

I have to concede to Adam Chalom that the idea that the sufferings of the Jewish people are caused by their sins would, if pushed to its limit, apply to the Holocaust. But neither Isaiah nor any other prophet was obedient to the rules of logic as we understand them today. Indeed, to stick with Isaiah alone, the book bearing his name is so full of logical inconsistencies that I see no violation of its spirit in my hope that he would have excluded the Holocaust from the general rule. Far be it from me to deny credit to what Mr. Chalom calls "the courageous work of Jewish men and women" in preserving the Jewish people. But he is mistaken if he thinks that *this* idea contradicts the prophetic conviction that sin is the cause of suffering. On the contrary, it is a correlative of that very idea. But I no more expect Mr. Chalom to agree with me than Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov (whom he echoes in Jewish terms) would.

Daniel Bell is correct about the follow-up to the "How odd of God" crack. It was written by an American businessman named Cecil Browne, whom I myself quoted in an article I wrote a few months ago for *National Review*. There I also pointed out that the original jibe, which is often attributed to Hilaire Belloc, was (according to the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*) actually written in 1924 by another Englishman, William Norman Ewer (1885-1976). According to the same source, Browne was born in 1932. (I do not know whether he is still alive; nor am I certain he was Jewish.) Mr. Bell, incidentally, misquotes the last few words of Browne's riposte, which were "spurn the Jews," not "hate the Jews."

Joseph I. Ungar has a good point, but he fails to note that the first Isaiah was wrong in prophesying that Jerusalem would never be lost. It was saved from the Assyrians (whether or not as a result of the plague we read about in the Bible), but it fell under Persian control later on when Cyrus conquered the Assyrian empire. As I indicated in my article, Deutero-Isaiah was very bitter when Cyrus, while allowing the Jews in Babylonian exile to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple, did not at the same time restore the city to Jewish sovereignty.

I was unaware that Harry Orlinsky deserved the credit for proving that *almah* means "young woman" rather than "virgin," though my impression is that this was known by Jewish readers of Hebrew all along. Be that as it may, I agree with Lawrence Briskin about the suffering servant, and he certainly helps strengthen the sketchier argument I offered in my article.

David Basch is right: I should have written "Judah" rather than "Palestine." On the other hand, at the time of Jesus, the Romans did refer to the Holy Land as Palestine.

I am so overwhelmed by what Michael Balch says about me in the conclusion to his letter that the only decent response is to bow my head. I do so too in reading the amazingly generous letters from Jeffrey Hart (to whom I also owe thanks for the fascinating information about William Tyndale), Francis Jacobson, Herman M. Sturm, and William F. Buckley, Jr.

In the context of Mr. Balch's earlier remarks, however, I will take the opportunity to answer a question that has been asked of me privately about the author of the phrase "scandal of particularity." I have been unable to discover who coined it, but the 19th-century Protestant German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher was one of its prominent users and may even have been the original author.

Microsoft

TO THE EDITOR:

Peter W. Huber ["monopoly.com," April] makes nearly all the right points about the government's lawsuit against Microsoft, but then inexplicably lurches to the wrong conclusion.

No antitrust lawyer, Mr. Huber asserts, can determine whether Windows "has been coded, packaged, or licensed to do consumers more harm than good." Both Netscape and Microsoft, he reminds us, "wanted to create an integrated platform that did it all." Yet the Justice Department insists that Netscape—by layering operating-system functions on top of a browser—is behaving competitively; while Microsoft—by layering browser functions on top of an operating system—is behaving anticompetitively.

Nor has Microsoft's dominance had a stifling effect on software markets. Indeed, Mr. Huber writes, "software has now become the main engine of productivity and innovation across the economy." Moreover, Microsoft has hardly rested on its laurels, as one might expect of a monopolist. The company "has added lines of code to its programs, doubling and redoubling their capabilities year after year."

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Next, Mr. Huber dismisses the "old-style antitrust" rubrics of tying, market foreclosure, predatory practices, and leveraging. Antitrust law, he maintains, cannot "turn on . . . the vigorous assertion . . . that 'operating system' and 'browser' are separate products. . . . [T]here is no objective way to ascertain whether folding in new features . . . represents the 'tying' of two products or the 'improving' of one."

What is worse, argues Mr. Huber, the remedies floated by the Justice Department will not work. Horizontal divestiture will mean "the demise of the Windows standard." Vertical divestiture will simply buy time before the "inexorable march back toward . . . a bundled browser." Conduct remedies "often lead to years of stifling judicial supervision." Most telling, "[f]ew consumers would welcome such disruption; most of us . . . would rather stick with Microsoft." And Microsoft's rivals have "far more to lose from the collapse of the Microsoft platform than from its robust survival."

If that is not enough to quash antitrust devotees, Mr. Huber caps his analysis with this dire prediction: "By the time the Supreme Court ever gets to see this case, Microsoft's hegemony will be history." That is because the "Windows-Intel desktop has peaked, and everyone from Silicon Valley to Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Washington knows it."

Those are powerful arguments, from which the obvious conclusion must be that the government should never have brought this case. Incredibly, though, having offered a persuasive litany of reasons to infer that antitrust regulators do not have a clue, Mr. Huber somehow justifies the government's pathetic crusade with the bland assurance that "[t]he case has already had a direct impact on Microsoft's practices. . . . Contracts have already been redrafted and toned down. Tight links between Windows and browser code have been severed." But if Mr. Huber is right that Microsoft has changed its practices, those are the very practices he has identified as having no enduring significance.

In a last-ditch effort to bridge the chasm between his evidence and his verdict, Mr. Huber trumpets the salutary effects of unbundling where there are "[o]ther companies with dominant positions"—like cable properties, local telephone service, and the electric-power industry. But unlike those businesses, Microsoft has never been a government-protected monopoly, nor is it characterized by physical plant. Instead, Microsoft attained its dominance without state-fortified barriers to entry, by exploiting intellectual capital that cannot be monopolized and has no physical dimension.

Not to worry, consoles Mr. Huber: even if "Judge Jackson gets it wrong, other judges deciding other cases can get it right." Tell that to Microsoft's shareholders after their $500-billion corporation has been dismembered. Tell it to software developers after they have spent $30 billion for reprogramming to accommodate multiple Windows standards. Tell it to the companies that decline to take similar risks and commit similar resources for fear that their intellectual output will be turned over to competitors. Or tell it to the consumers who will pick up the tab.

ROBERT A. LEVY
Cato Institute
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Peter W. Huber presents the paradox of monopolists who act competitively because they are fearful that in the next evolution of a market they will be superseded by another monopolist. But he fails to draw the logical conclusion from this analysis—monopolists who act as if they were in a competitive market are a boon rather than a threat to consumers.

After mentioning in the opening paragraph the challenge to antitrust lawyers of "protecting economic competition and the interests of consumers," he says later that the goal of antitrust in the high-tech era may be "to protect monopolists from each other." As examples of firms that are "monopolists" in the brave new world of information technology he lists Microsoft, Intel, Yahoo, and Amazon. While all of these firms have achieved varying levels of market success, none of them is a monopolist. Nor has their market-share dominance hurt consumers. Intel has offered lower prices and better products every year; Amazon has slowly and steadily built our personal libraries at 30 percent off the price of all hardcovers; and Netscape has been forced to offer its product for free.

While the entry into other markets of monopolists like Microsoft has not always benefited the consumer, I would rather be protected from Microsoft's heavy-handedness by Palm, Sun, and Linux than by the antitrust division of the Justice Department. To succeed, the former must innovate and please customers, whereas the latter has no such benchmark and is vulnerable to political influence.

Mr. Huber claims that bringing Microsoft to trial will induce more civility in future "monopolists'" dealings with their competitors. But we should be far more concerned with how they treat their customers.

RUSSELL ROBERTS
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri

PETER W. HUBER writes:

Absent a settlement, the next word in the Microsoft case will likely come from the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals—not, I would wager, from the Supreme Court. My guess is that Microsoft will do well on appeal—which is to say, its big loss will be transformed into a much smaller one. But I am pretty sure the appellate court's opinion will not read anything like Robert A. Levy's letter.

Yes, it is hard to distinguish one economic product from another—nowhere more so than in the software industry. But nobody doubts that a PC operating system is a different product from (say) the software that helps land a jumbo jet. Product lines will be drawn, one way or another. What companies "want to create" does not define what products they actually sell at any point in time, and antitrust law does not (and should not) depend on whether a company has a physical plant.

Nor should antitrust law

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Prescription Drug Costs: Has Canada Found the Answer?

By William McArthur, M.D.

Some Americans faced with the rising costs of prescription drugs look longingly at Canada, where prescription drugs appear to cost less than in the United States. The fact is that, while some drugs do cost less in Canada, others don't. Furthermore, many drugs are not available at any cost in Canada. The effect of Canadian policies is to restrict the overall availability of prescription drugs through a combination of a lengthy drug approval process and oppressive price controls.

First of all, Canada's federal drug approval process takes much longer than that of the U.S., resulting in delayed access for Canadians to new drugs. For example, Canadian acceptance of the drug Viagra came a whole year after it had been available in the US. For 12 months Canadians who needed Viagra, or another of the many drugs delayed or denied approval, had to go to the US to get their medication.

Even if a drug wins federal approval, it faces 10 more hurdles to become widely accessible – the 10 provinces. Each province has a review committee that must approve the drug for reimbursement under the public healthcare system. For example, in British Columbia, neither the new anti-arthritic drugs Celebrex and Vioxx, nor the Alzheimer's treatment Aricept, have been approved for reimbursement, severely limiting their availability. Further, the provincial approval times vary greatly from province to province, creating further inequities.

Price controls imposed by a government agency, the Patented Medicines Price Review Board (PMPRB), are the reason some prescription drugs cost less in Canada than in the United States. However, while keeping some prescription drug prices down through price controls, Canada has been unable to control overall drug spending. OECD statistics reveal that when the PMPRB was created in 1988, per capita expenditure on prescription drugs was $106; by 1996 that had doubled to $211 per person. One study of international drug price comparisons by Prof. Patricia Danzon of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania concluded that, on the average, drug prices in Canada were higher than those in the United States. Some individual drugs, particularly generics, cost far more in Canada. For example, the anti-hypertensive drug atenolol is four times more expensive in Canada than in the United States. And a University of Toronto study found that the main effect of price controls on prescription drugs was to limit patients' access to newer medicines so that they had to rely more on hospitals and surgery.

All provinces require that chemically identical and cheaper generic drugs be substituted for more expensive brand-name drugs when they are available. However, British Columbia has gone farther with a "reference price system." Under this system, the government can require that a patient receiving a drug subsidy be treated with whichever costs the least: (a) a generic substitute, (b) a drug with similar but not identical active ingredients or (c) a completely different compound deemed to have the same therapeutic effect. Patients are often forced to switch medicines, sometimes in mid-treatment, when the reference price system mandates a change. Twenty-seven percent of physicians in British Columbia report that they have had to admit patients to the emergency room or hospital as a result of the mandated switching of medicines. Sixty-eight percent report confusion or uncertainty by cardiovascular or hypertension patients, and 60 percent have seen patients' conditions worsen or their symptoms accelerate due to mandated switching.

> ***Canada has succeeded only in preventing Canadians from obtaining drugs that might have reduced hospital stays and expensive medical procedures***

Through limiting the availability of prescription drugs and controlling the prices of those that are available, Canada has succeeded only in preventing Canadians from obtaining drugs that might have reduced hospital stays and expensive medical procedures. The end result of this is that Canadians are getting a lower standard of health care at a higher cost than patients and taxpayers have a right to expect.

One lesson that Americans should learn from the Canadian experience is that when government pays for drugs, government controls the supply. As soon as government has to pay the bill, efforts are made to restrict the availability of newer and more effective drugs. The inevitable result is that other health expenditures like surgery and emergency visits increase, and patients suffer.

Dr. William McArthur is a palliative care physician, writer and health policy analyst in Vancouver, B.C. This article is excerpted from an analysis prepared for the National Center for Policy Analysis, a market-oriented think tank based in Dallas, Texas (www.ncpa.org).

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be concerned with the overall health of industries; rather, it should address markets. Mr. Levy is correct in saying that intellectual capital "cannot be monopolized." But intellectual capital does not occupy a single market—Bill Gates does not compete in the same market as, say, Stephen King. Contrary to what Russell Roberts suggests, I do not believe (and did not state) that a whole slew of information monopolists have already emerged and settled into place—only that that could be the inexorable direction of things, given the economies of scale that prevail in these markets.

The Justice Department and Judge Jackson easily distinguished Microsoft's conduct from Netscape's on the simple and altogether traditional ground that Microsoft possessed substantial and fairly durable market power in one of its product lines; Netscape did not. Antitrust law does not (and should not) care whether a miscreant has rested on its laurels. And for self-evident reasons, antitrust law is stricter—not more lenient—with monopolists that lack a government-granted franchise than with those that have been granted one.

It is not (and should not be) a defense that the market has already "gotten over it." Horizontal price fixing, for example, is a criminal offense (and should be) even if it never had any market impact at all. Like every judicial proceeding, the principal—and constitutionally mandated—purpose of a lawsuit is to measure *past* behavior against legal norms of conduct.

Yes, the antitrust process often fails to fashion an appropriate remedy. (I have said so myself, many times.) But the alternative is either a regulatory commission—far worse—or no government oversight at all—a political daydream.

Had it been my call to make, I would not have brought the Microsoft case to court—like Mr. Roberts, my instinct would have been to let the market hash this one out on its own. But Joel Klein's decision to prosecute was well within the bounds of reasonable prosecutorial discretion. And his decision was emphatically vindicated by the findings of Judge Jackson, who is, by and large, a sober and sensible federal judge. Whether or not the judicial system will make a complete mess of things in the appellate and follow-up remedial phases of this case remains to be seen.

Crimes and Misdemeanors

TO THE EDITOR:

Carol Iannone seems to be one of those people who hate Woody Allen to such a degree that they feel justified in spreading wickedly false information about him ["The Devil and Woody Allen," June]. She writes that Allen "had been behaving 'inappropriately' with his and Mia Farrow's adopted daughter, an adorable blonde toddler named Dylan," and that he greeted all the charges, including this one, "with unflappable blandness." Both these statements are outrageously false.

When the charge about Dylan was first made, Allen held a news conference at which he scathingly denounced the ugliness of the charge. I am guilty of having an affair with a nineteen-year-old girl, he said, but not of engaging in indecent behavior with a small child. And immediately after Mia Farrow won the custody case, her own lawyer, appearing on the *Charlie Rose Show*, admitted that perhaps the inappropriate behavior with Dylan never happened, suggesting instead that the child made it up.

On that same program, the attorney pointed out that Farrow won her custody suit by convincing the judge that Allen had never acted like a father to the children. For the purpose of accusing Allen of incestuous relations with Soon-Yi, however, she was happy, the attorney said, to reassert that he had been a kind of father after all.

Carol Iannone trumpets the moral law of the Torah in her last paragraph, but writing ugly falsehoods against someone is not in accord with Torah.

LEON ZITZER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Carol Iannone has it right when she says of Woody Allen that "rationalizing his own behavior [is] a matter of interest, surely, to few other than himself." But this invalidates her own superficial analysis of Allen's films. She claims that one could see the breakup of Allen's relationship coming in his movies, but why is she looking for the evolution of the director's perversions? The films should stand on their own merits, not on what they tell us about Allen's life.

As to whether Allen has destroyed his "gift to make us laugh," that is a matter of opinion and certainly not proved by Carol Iannone's article.

Film fans pretty much agree that Allen is an artist of the top rank. Unfortunately, this article adds nothing to the literature about Allen's work.

ROSALIE BROSILOW
Rehovot, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

Carol Iannone criticizes Woody Allen's motives and morals, but good ideas in literature and film often come from persons of questionable character. Tolstoy, Joyce, and Hemingway were all self-obsessed and disobliging of others. Allen's films may be, as she claims, destructive and nihilistic, but in his comic, ironic, and playful style he raises serious moral and ethical questions.

MICHAEL BORGE
Cambridge, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITOR:

There are two ironies that Carol Iannone did not note in her article about Woody Allen. One is that Mia Farrow herself had once been "fresher fare" for an older man, André Previn, and her affair with him precipitated his own wife's nervous breakdown.

The other is that so many women who have been reluctant to forgive the filmmaker for his misconduct seem positively eager to forgive President Clinton for sins that are at least as vile, and made more so by the latter's hypocritical pose as a champion of women.

DENISE NOE
Atlanta, Georgia

CAROL IANNONE writes:

I do not "hate" Woody Allen, as Leon Zitzer puts it. Indeed, as I attempted to

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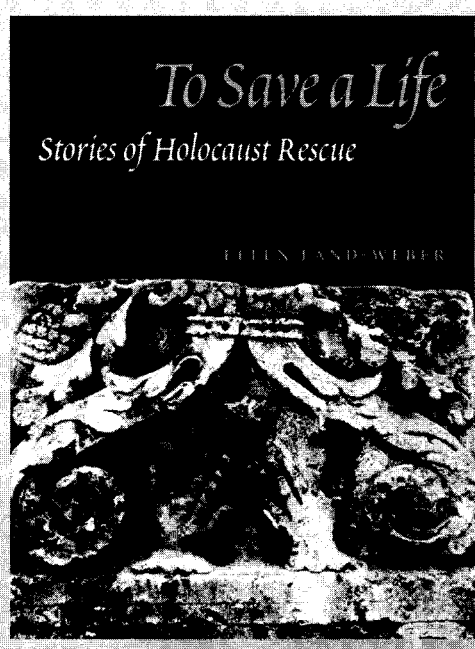

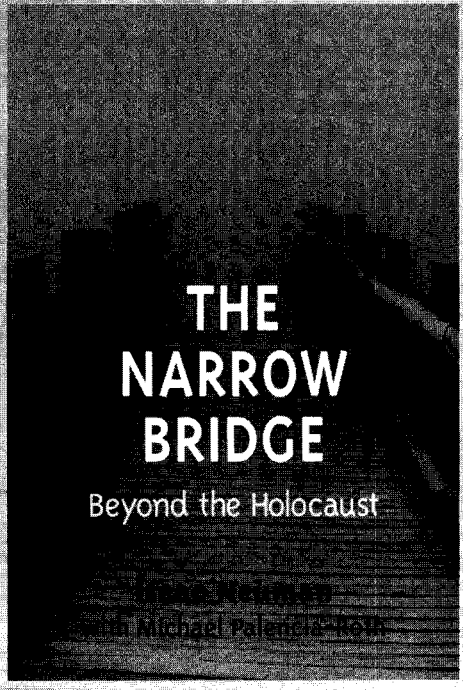

During Rabbi Neuman's spiritual journey through Nazi work camps to America he kept his feet on the "narrow bridge" of life by holding firm to his faith.

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convey in my article, I have enjoyed many of his films and have even found his screen persona "lovable." But I freely concede that I was among those who were shocked at what came to light about his relationship with Farrow and the children.

Allen's conduct with his small daughter is a well-known matter of public record. The issue was not molestation, but, according to a clinical psychologist involved in the case, inappropriate behavior, consisting of too much physical contact and obsessive attention.

Allen's response to the imbroglio suggests that he must have had some wrenching moments, but his remark, "The heart wants what it wants," and his insistence that, as Mr. Zitzer says, all he was guilty of was having an affair with a nineteen-year-old girl, are amazingly bland, given the nature of his actions. Although he tried to claim that he was not a father figure to Soon-Yi, it was in a general familial capacity that he had had frequent and unquestioned access to her, right under Farrow's gaze, and it was presumably in that capacity that he listened to Soon-Yi's catalogue of complaints against her mother, helping to widen the gulf between them. Even worse, she is the sister of his own children.

To Rosalie Brosilow's insistence that art be judged on its merits, surely the intellectual and moral contents of a work are part of its merits. I indicated in my article that *Crimes and Misdemeanors* is mesmerizing and well made (and, let me add now, features letter-perfect performances, convincing dialogue, and precision pacing), but its vision is one of a nihilistic triumph of the will and it deliberately eviscerates any conception of a transcendent moral law.

Similarly, I agree with Michael Borge that good ideas in literature can come from artists who are flawed human beings, but many of Woody Allen's ideas, as conveyed in some of his films, are far from "good." Besides, he is hardly an artist in the T.S. Eliot art-as-extinction-of-personality mold (and a lot of good that did Eliot in thwarting biographical criticism of *his* work). Like the movies of one of his models, Federico Fellini, Allen's are intensely autobiographical, and (unlike Fellini, by the way) he himself has made moral behavior one of his central themes.

Denise Noe makes two interesting points, both of which go beyond the scope of my essay.

Two Chinas

TO THE EDITOR:

Aaron L. Friedberg's excellent article ["Will We Abandon Taiwan?", May] covers most of the relevant questions concerning relations between China and Taiwan and America's association with each. But Mr. Friedberg overestimates China's desire to employ actual force and underestimates its desire to achieve economic development.

The Clinton administration may be motivated by too many idealistic assumptions, but its overall objective of bringing China into the company of modern nations is the correct one. Only trade will motivate China to reform centralized party rule.

China's rhetorical attacks on Taiwan are primarily just that—rhetoric. Its rulers have little desire to ruin the economic advances to which they have devoted so much effort. Moreover, America's previous naval support of Taiwan in opposing the threat of Chinese missiles launched into the Taiwan Strait remains a serious deterrent in China's calculations.

Nevertheless, it would be unwise to misjudge China's chauvinistic sentiments, which, if provoked too severely by Taiwanese bombast and congressional anti-Communist rhetoric, might explode into something dangerous. China's actual possession of Taiwan may only date from the 17th century, as Mr. Friedberg mentions, but 300 years is long enough for the Chinese to feel they have a right to it.

WILLIAM H. RIDDELL
Tampa, Florida

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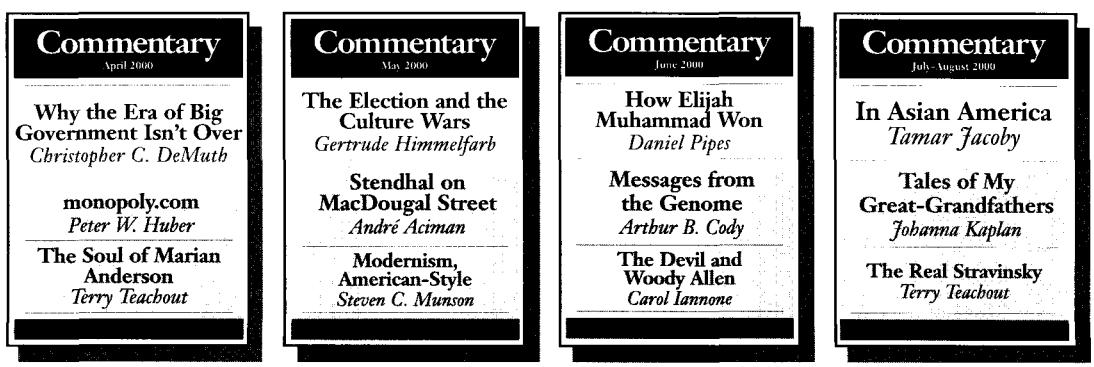

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TO THE EDITOR:

As Aaron L. Friedberg points out, the Clinton administration has treated Taiwan like many of the small countries that the United States has purported to defend in recent years. But much more is at stake in this case. Taiwan produces some 15 percent of the world's semiconductors and, more important, almost 80 percent of a very specific type, the programmable logic device/field programmable gate array.

These specialized semiconductors are used in all but the most rudimentary electronic devices, and any significant disruption in their supply would cripple not only the high-tech electronics industries in the U.S. but also our most sophisticated weapons systems, including the F-16, F-18, and F-22 fighter airplanes, smart bombs, and cruise missiles. Should the People's Liberation Army shut off these semiconductor producers, it would control America's ability to defend itself.

MIKE LESKO
Plano, Texas

TO THE EDITOR:

I was disappointed to find no mention in Aaron L. Friedberg's article of the military hardware that Israel is planning to sell to the People's Republic of China. It would have been useful to know what impact the new hardware will have on China's capability vis-à-vis Taiwan.

LEO RETTIG
Cedarhurst, New York

AARON L. FRIEDBERG writes:

William H. Riddell's letter contains a formula for disaster: assume that trade will someday transform China; downplay or ignore China's threats, and its ongoing preparations, to use force against Taiwan; count on symbolic displays of American naval power to deter the PRC in any future crisis; and identify "Taiwanese bombast and congressional anti-Communist rhetoric" as the principal threats to peace. China's current leaders are certainly not eager to risk war, but they are likely for their own internal reasons to take a very aggressive stance toward Taiwan in the months and years ahead: if they sense weakness, they could miscalculate. We can reduce this danger by helping Taiwan prepare to defend itself, and by making sure that Beijing knows that an unprovoked attack would mean an unavoidable confrontation with the United States.

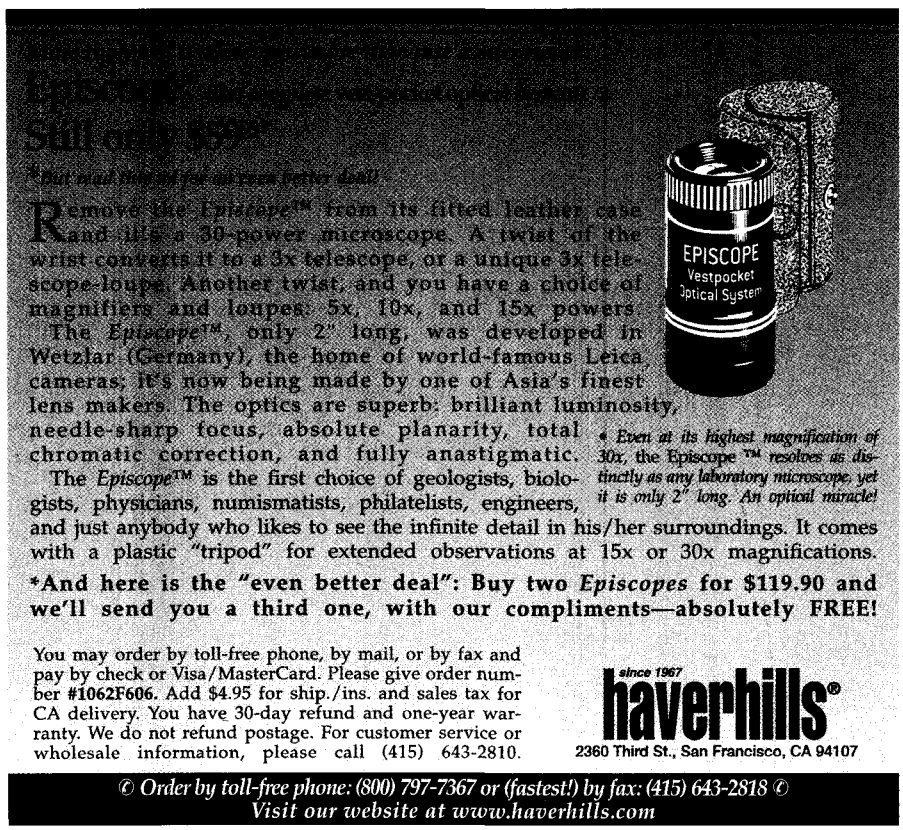
Mike Lesko probably overstates the unique importance of Taiwanese-made semiconductors to the American military, but his letter points to an important fact: despite its relatively small size, Taiwan is a wealthy and technologically very sophisticated country. A Chinese attack on the island would have far-reaching consequences for the global economy. Taiwan's absorption by the mainland would put significant additional resources at the PRC's disposal and could seriously alter the balance of power in Asia.

Leo Rettig is most likely referring to Israel's Phalcon airborne radar system. The acquisition of the Phalcon by China would have brought it a good deal closer to its goal of one day achieving air supremacy over Taiwan. Under considerable American pressure, Israel recently made the wise decision to cancel the Phalcon sale.

Sticks and Stones

TO THE EDITOR:

Exactly a year ago, Justus Reid Weiner revealed in COMMENTARY that Edward Said, professor of English at Columbia University-cum-PLO propagandist, had never had the childhood in Jerusalem he long claimed for himself ["'My Beautiful Old House' and Other Fabrications by Edward Said," September 1999].



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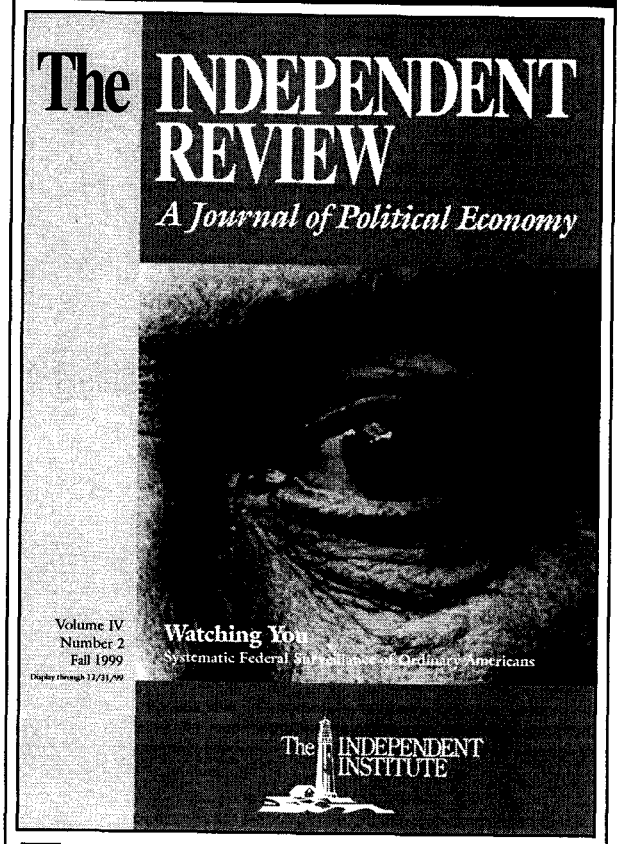

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I, for one, was not surprised: I had been a student of Said's at Columbia College before the Six-Day war of 1967—before, that is, he reconstituted himself as an Ancient Palestinian, a nationality allegedly native to the Holy Land since at least the third day of Creation. At that time, if he advertised himself as anything, it was as a Lebanese-Egyptian, which jibes with Mr. Weiner's revelations. Indeed, Said himself would write in his 1979 book, *The Question of Palestine*, that "for a long time the general Arab umbrella covered my specific history, adequately it seemed," which was his oblique, Arabesque way of saying that he had not been in the habit of calling himself a Palestinian at all.

But this past July, one morning as I sipped my coffee, a picture of my old professor jumped out at me from my local Israeli newspaper. There he was, in baseball cap and windbreaker, standing at the Lebanese border with Israel, heroically throwing rocks over the fence at Jews in uniform who he knew would not respond.

The picture, taken by a photographer for Agence France Presse, would soon be flashed around the world and occasion a fair degree of comment, including by yours truly on Israeli radio and the World Wide Web, where I do commentary in English for IsraelNationalNews.com. Said himself issued a statement that he did not see any soldiers in the vicinity but had been "infected" by the "spirit of the place" to make a "symbolic gesture"; nor did he have any idea "that the media people were there or that [he] was the object of attention." According to eyewitness and other accounts, every verifiable part of this statement is false. Again, hardly a surprise—but, thanks to this photograph, a little mystery of many years' standing concerning this scholar-poseur began to resolve itself.

As I say, I studied with Said back in 1966 as one of many New York Jewish intellectuals-in-training at Columbia who secretly aspired to become the next Philip Roth or Norman Mailer. Like others, I had registered for a required survey course in 18th-century English literature with this as yet, if not infamous, then unfamous and untenured thirty-one-year-old lecturer.

The fact that Assistant Professor Said was an Arab had nothing to do with anything. One evening, a bunch of us invited him to dinner at an off-campus apartment, and a pleasant time was had by all. He was a professor of literature, not of Middle Eastern politics, and books, not the plight of any Ancient Palestinians—a people as yet unmentioned in any UN, let alone League of Nations, document—were our table-talk. Virtually no one, pre-1967, used the term Palestinian, and neither did he.

This, remember, was before Israel, fighting for its life, would capture the high ground and come into occupation of what the *New York Times* stylebook then called "the western bank of the Jordan River." At the time, the future "West Bank" was still entirely under Jordanian rule and perfectly *judenrein*, with nobody chastising Israel for being an obstacle to a state for any ancient nationality, let alone a

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"racist, fascist, imperialist aggressor," as it would soon become known in Said's circles.

For me, Said's survey course was the last straw in my career as an English major. One big reason I quit was the industrial-strength boredom of that class. Not that he was unenergetic, or unprepared, or uninformed when it came to the syllabus: Samuel Johnson, Samuel Richardson, Alexander Pope, that crowd. But there was something missing in his presentation—in him, really—that only now, 34 years later, have I finally begun to comprehend.

Although he was fluent in English and had grown up in a wealthy, English-speaking household; although he had attended the exclusive New England prep school Mount Hermon (a name that appears fourteen times in the Hebrew Bible, if never in the Qu'ran or any Ancient Palestinian text) before going on to earn degrees at Princeton and Harvard, Said never made 18th-century England come alive. There was some kind of fog between, on the one hand, his knowledge of the facts of English culture and civilization and, on the other, his sensibility (to use a fine 18th-century word). What was it?

The photograph of my former Egyptian-Lebanese prof as he reared back, like a pitcher on the mound, to hurl rocks at Jews who he had reason to know would do nothing in retaliation called to mind two items of English literature. The first was *An Account of the Manners & Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836) by the famous English Orientalist Edward William Lane, who spent many years living and traveling in the Middle East; in this work, Lane describes how—for fun—Arab riffraff would throw stones in the street at passing Jews, safe in the certainty that they would not hit back. The second was a record of a visit to Jerusalem in 1855 by Moses Montefiore, the British Jewish philanthropist, who had petitioned the Sultan in Constantinople (so he writes) for permission to construct a large awning extending from the Temple Mount plateau over the Western Wall because Arabs—for fun—liked to stand on top and pelt the Jews praying below, who they knew would not hit back.

The Arab intifada of the late 1980's was also, after all, a mass, prolonged case of the stoning of Jews by "street-Arabs" (to use a term from the *Oxford English Dictionary*), who would often heroically employ their little brothers and sisters as shields, knowing that Israel's soldiers would not use deadly force against children and that, on the rare occasion when a child did get hurt, it would at least make great footage on CNN.

Last year, thanks to Justus Reid Weiner and COMMENTARY, Edward Said's veneer as a refugee was peeled away. And now, thanks to Agence France Presse, sans the Savile Row duds of a wealthy academic, striking a pose fit for a redneck pelting blacks, or a street-Arab stoning Jews, he finally emerged as who he is.

SHA'I BEN-TEKOA
Arutz (Channel) 7
Bet El, Israel

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Commentary
September 2000

Holocaust Reparations—A Growing Scandal

Gabriel Schoenfeld

GIVEN THE depth of the scars inflicted by the Nazis in World War II, it is no surprise that issues of restitution and reparations have refused to go away.* The only surprise is that they should now, at this late date, be occupying center stage, where they have also become a subject of increasing contention.

The sheer scope of devastation in World War II is impossible to compass. By the time the last shot was fired some five-and-a-half decades ago, a mind-numbing 53 million lives had been extinguished in the concentration camps, in the cities, and on the battlefields of half the world. And no less huge than the toll in human life was the destruction and theft of property; everywhere the Nazis turned, they not only killed but plundered.

The Jews of Europe, singled out for a special fate, were victims on both counts. In most places, they were first forced by the SS to provide a precise inventory of all their property, from silverware to real estate, from stamp collections to stock-exchange holdings, from furniture to insurance policies and bank accounts. All this they were compelled to surrender, after which they were gathered together in ghettos and deprived of sustenance, and then, after a time, taken away to be shot, gassed, or worked to death as slaves.

The bill for this death, destruction, and robbery came due in 1945 with Germany's surrender. But the prostrate country was hardly in a position to pay. Only by 1951 did the Federal Republic, which constituted one half of the by-now divided country, voluntarily undertake to compensate the few pitiful survivors or the families of the slaughtered and to provide restitution to the holders of the property it had seized. In the 50 years that have elapsed since this historic step, some 4 million claims have been paid and a total of $55 billion has been disbursed both to the state of Israel and to individual victims around the world.

Today, over 100,000 Holocaust survivors, primarily residents of Israel and the United States, continue to receive monthly pensions from the German government. Yet these numbers, significant as they are, by no means indicate that a final reckoning has been made. Indeed, a huge tangle of claims still appears to remain unsettled, and dealing with them has lately become a major enterprise.

Here in the United States, the organs of the federal government, coordinated by the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Stuart Eizenstat, are engaged in an intense diplomatic thrust to negotiate a resolution to the outstanding issues. They have been propelled forward by the World Jewish Congress (WJC), an umbrella body led by the billionaire tycoon, Edgar M. Bronfman, as well as by two organizations with which the WJC is closely affiliated

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* In what follows I use the words "restitution" and "reparations" interchangeably, though the former, strictly speaking, refers to the return of property to its rightful owner and the latter to compensatory payments for wartime or occupation losses agreed to, usually in a treaty, by a vanquished belligerent state.

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and that share some of the same key personnel: the World Jewish Restitution Organization and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (known as the Claims Conference). At the same time, a small army of lawyers has filed class-action suits against European corporations said to have profited from the war at the expense of Holocaust victims. Revelations of misdeeds and complicity, and demands for huge sums in recompense, have become daily fare.

Politicians have not been shy about climbing on board. Former Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York made Holocaust restitution into one of his signature issues, holding widely publicized hearings on the conduct of Swiss banks during and after World War II. Insurance commissioners in California, Florida, and Washington, all with aspirations to higher office, have been generating favorable coverage as they pursue European firms attempting to conduct business in their states. On September 11, at the height of this year's election season, many of these politicians will come together at a banquet at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York; there, under the sponsorship of Bronfman, they will be draped in the mantle of their good deeds. Among others being honored are D'Amato, Hillary Clinton (now running for the Senate in New York), and Alan Hevesi, the New York City comptroller.

Leaving aside the issues raised by the very idea of a reparations banquet, let alone a number of names of dubious relevance (like Mrs. Clinton's) on the roster of honorees, the continually expanding list of Holocaust restitution projects begs to be examined on its merits—not least because it has begun to come under fire from a number of different directions.

PERHAPS THE first question to be addressed is the one with which I began: why is all this happening only now, after so many decades have passed? The obvious answer has to do with the dissolution of the USSR and its East European empire.

By 1990, almost all the victims of Nazi persecution living in Western Europe and the United States had received a measure of compensation from the German government; but this was hardly true of denizens of the East who fell under Communist rule after the war. The East German authorities, for one, insisted all along that they had no special obligations to the Jews who suffered under Hitler—victims, they asserted, not of Germany per se but of a Nazism that had been eradicated in their own country even as it remained (so they claimed) very much alive in the Western zone. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe and the USSR, postwar regimes vigorously pursued anti-Semitic policies of their own, up to and including judicial murder. And in countries that were busy nationalizing all private property, assets seized by the Nazis were, with rare exception, never returned to private hands.

With the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, and largely as a result of pressure by both the U.S. government and Jewish organizations, a variety of new initiatives were set in motion. Reunified Germany moved to establish a fund for impoverished Holocaust survivors from Eastern Europe who had hitherto received minimal or no compensation. Another German fund, officially opened this past July, will provide money to the forced and slave laborers conscripted into German firms. Elsewhere, arrangements have been made to restore confiscated property to its rightful owners or their heirs or, where heirs cannot be found, to designate any proceeds from the sale of such property to Holocaust education or to social services for Holocaust survivors around the world. And so forth, in virtually every country of Eastern Europe.

Not entirely by coincidence, shortly after the question of restitution became unfrozen in the East, two issues involving Switzerland came dramatically to the fore. The first was that country's role as a neutral power in the war. In this role it not only enforced an exclusionary policy against Jews seeking refuge behind its borders but also provided assistance to Nazi Germany in laundering gold, consisting of some $4 billion (in today's dollars) looted from the treasuries of conquered Europe and an additional $1.2 billion taken from victims of the Holocaust; this last included not only wedding rings but dental crowns extracted from corpses in the various death camps and melted down into ingots. Secondly, attention focused on the Swiss bank accounts established by many European Jews in the 1920's and 30's, thought by those who opened them to be exceedingly secure. Indeed, *so* secure were they—and so wrapped in the secrecy that is the selling point of the Swiss banking system—that in the years following the war they became for all practical purposes another windfall for Swiss bankers on top of the one offered by Nazi gold.

This state of affairs was hardly unknown or even forgotten in the West in the postwar era, but it took until the 1990's before the World Jewish Congress and the U.S. government embarked on a concerted effort to resolve it. Coming under great pressure, the Swiss government and major Swiss banks rushed to create a "Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust" along with a "Solidarity Fund"

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for other victims of oppression. In the face of a slew of American-based lawsuits, Swiss banks also agreed last year to a $1.25-billion settlement aimed at resolving all outstanding claims and averting sanctions on their U.S. operations.

While the Swiss banking controversy has not been fully defused, a different set of claims has also been making headlines around the world. These involve the various kinds of insurance policies issued to Jews and others in the 1920's and 30's, which, for one reason or another—including the death of the purchaser in the Holocaust and the destruction of documents in the war—were never paid. To deal with this exceedingly complex matter, still another commission was established in the late 1990's, this one headed by the veteran diplomat Lawrence Eagleburger and comprising German and Italian insurance companies, representatives of the state of Israel and of world Jewry, and European and American insurance regulators.

In the wake of a series of tempestuous meetings, some progress has been made toward a settlement in this area as well. At the same time, however, a number of multibillion-dollar suits have been filed against the companies. Several states in the U.S. have also passed laws forcing European insurance companies doing business within their borders to disclose Holocaust-era records, and have commenced actions to recover unpaid insurance proceeds. The issue remains highly charged, with allegations of bad faith and betrayal on all sides.

THE VARIOUS disputes now unfolding are not entirely unprecedented, with respect either to the basic issues they raise or to the intensity with which they are being fought. Indeed, in the early 1950's, the debate in Israel over whether to accept money from Germany was, if anything, far more acrimonious than the debate in Germany about whether to pay it. Menachem Begin, then the young leader of the right-wing Herut party, held street demonstrations to denounce the government for accepting German "blood money." It was only as the 50's wore on and the funds began to flow that the debate in Israel over this subject essentially died out.

In the United States, by contrast, a rather different pattern has prevailed. Though in the past decades the Holocaust has emerged as the central preoccupation of American Jewry, until virtually yesterday there has been remarkably little discussion, let alone disputation, over the proliferating initiatives, commissions, negotiations, funds, and lawsuits designed, ostensibly, to aid the surviving victims of the Holocaust and to return to the Jewish community that which was stolen from it.

In large part, this silence undoubtedly indicates concurrence with the idea that, in the face of a crime so immense, every last ounce of justice must be done; history's greatest villains must be punished and punished again while those who suffered deserve every last measure of recompense. But other factors are at work as well.

One of these is easily enough comprehended. The anti-Semitic pseudohistorians who deny that the Holocaust happened have battened on the issue of reparations and pressed it into the service of their "counternarrative," as an example of how predacious Jews are profiting from their invented tale of suffering. One finds this kind of thing, for instance, in the *Journal of Historical Review*, the principal publication of Holocaust deniers in the United States, in articles with titles like "Jewish Blackmail Against Switzerland" and "No End in Sight: Germany Has Paid Out More Than $61.8 Billion in Third Reich Reparations." Meanwhile, on the far Left, a version of this same thesis has been put into play by some of the anti-Zionist followers of Noam Chomsky, as in a recent tract purporting to demonstrate that Jewish organizations have engaged in a ruthless campaign to maximize their own wealth and influence by manufacturing non-existent Holocaust survivors.*

In the face of this portrait of avaricious Jews exploiting the Holocaust for pecuniary gain—a portrait that draws upon time-honored anti-Semitic images—it is hardly unnatural that a general (if silent) consensus should reign within the Jewish community on the rightness of pressing restitution claims. But there have also been one or two notable dissenters. The syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer, for example, has worried aloud about what he terms a "grotesque scramble for money," a scramble whose only certain result is the "revival of Shylockian stereotypes." Abraham Foxman, chairman of the Anti-Defamation League, has voiced a related concern: thanks to the continuing demands for reparations, he has said, people around the world may be led to believe "that the Jews died [not] because they were Jews, but because they had bank accounts, gold, art, and property."

In Europe, what Krauthammer and Foxman fear has in fact happened, at least to some extent. Among the Swiss, the controversy surrounding Nazi gold and dormant bank accounts unleashed, at its height, a tide of anti-Semitic feeling unseen since the pre-

* *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, by Norman Finkelstein. Verso, 150 pp., $23.00.

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World War II era, complete with hate mail and death threats directed at officials of Jewish organizations and physical harassment of Orthodox Jews on city streets. In Austria, the ascension of Jörg Haider's Freedom party rested in part on widespread indignation at the bills being presented for that country's complicity in crimes against the Jews. In Germany, the *New York Times* reports, there has been "a nationalist and right-wing intellectual awakening" that reflects "weariness, even anger, at what is seen as Germany's eternal victimization" for the Holocaust. A vivid sign of this was on display in June when Germany's most prestigious literary award was bestowed on the revisionist historian Ernest Nolte: tellingly, Nolte used his acceptance speech to denounce the "collective accusation" continuously leveled at Germany since the war.

UNSETTLING THOUGH this European mood may be, it is by no means clear that it should have a decisive bearing on the pursuit of Holocaust claims. If such claims are legitimate, it would be a double injustice to forgo them out of fear of arousing anti-Semitism. Besides, as the *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen has pointed out, if the demands of Jewish organizations have exacerbated anti-Semitism in places like Switzerland, then perhaps it is the Swiss who "ought to look to their own values and not the Jews to theirs." But are the claims legitimate? And are they being pursued in a legitimate manner? In attempting to answer *these* questions, we unavoidably enter upon treacherous terrain.

Within the broad categories of restitution—slave labor, stolen artwork, confiscated personal property and real estate, dormant accounts, stock-exchange holdings, insurance polices—there are, of course, countless individual cases, each of which must inevitably stand or fall on its own merits. But after the passage of so many years, assessing the merits of any one case can itself be highly problematic.

The 1920's and 30's, the period in which many of the insurance policies and bank accounts now under dispute came into being, were decades of unremitting turbulence, with hyperinflation and depression roiling economies worldwide and the governments of Western and Eastern Europe responding with currency controls, devaluations, and other forms of intervention that left few instruments of worth untouched. This highly unstable era was followed by a war that created displacement on a global scale, with monetary, border, and regime changes, and widespread destruction of documents. After the war, Communism came to a great swath of Europe and the state assumed custody of all private assets and records. Even if private corporations were today consistently proceeding with the best will in the world, many claims would remain exceedingly difficult to sort out.

Consider a single case. Jack Brauns, formerly Jakob Braunsas, is currently suing the Italian insurance company, Assicurazioni Generali, in California courts for failing to make payment on a life-insurance policy on which he is a named beneficiary.

According to the set of facts presented by Generali, in 1930 Moisejus Braunsas, a resident of Lithuania, purchased a U.S.-dollar-denominated policy in the amount of $2,000 from Rigaer Union, a Latvian company in which Generali had an ownership interest and for which it was providing reinsurance, i.e., acting as a backer of last resort if Rigaer Union for some reason could not pay. In 1936, well before the Nazis appeared on the scene in Latvia, the policy's value was reduced to $800 for nonpayment of premiums, which also, under Latvian law, voided Generali's reinsurance guarantee. At approximately the same time that the premiums ceased being paid, the Latvian government enacted a monetary reform that forcibly converted all dollar-denominated insurance policies into lats-denominated ones, greatly reducing whatever residual value Braunsas's policy may have had. In January 1939, not long before the war came to Latvia, Rigaer Union was forcibly liquidated for failing to comply with a new law governing capital requirements for joint-stock companies; its policies were taken over by Dropiba, a far larger Latvian insurer with which Generali had no reinsurance tie.

Then came the war. First, Dropiba fell under Soviet rule when Latvia was annexed by the USSR in 1940. Then it was administered by the Nazis after they conquered Latvia in 1941. Finally, it fell once again under Soviet rule after Latvia was reconquered in late 1944. At that point, all private firms were absorbed by the state. Some 50 years later, after the USSR dissolved and Latvia again achieved independence, Dropiba resurfaced as a private firm.

Under the circumstances, Generali contends that it has no contractual obligations to Jack Brauns, and that if indeed he has a valid claim at all, he should apply in the first place to Dropiba. For his own part, needless to say, Jack Brauns adheres to a very different and highly compelling version of this same murky history.

Nor is this an atypical example of the ambiguities and difficulties inherent to the process of sorting things out—ambiguities and difficulties that perforce raise a question about the tactics that have been employed to compel settlements. If the issues were all cut and dried, not only would most claims

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have been settled long ago, but it would be entirely justifiable to employ the heaviest legal and political artillery to resolve the outstanding ones. But the issues, in many if not most instances, are not cut and dried. And yet, some inside and outside the organized Jewish community have unrestrainedly availed themselves of any method, however unseemly or even disreputable, to go after every last franc, lira, guilder, and mark, owed or not owed.

A GROWING number of attorneys practice the new specialty of Holocaust law. Although they like to wrap themselves in the rhetoric of a sacred cause, a *New York Times* story suggests an admixture that is at least 99 parts profane. In the free-for-all to obtain Holocaust victims as clients, the paper reports, "competing lawyers from the United States have barnstormed across Europe soliciting clients, publicly castigating each other and privately maneuvering to oust their adversaries." In the first 50 years after World War II, the number of Holocaust-related class-action law suits could be counted on two hands; in the last four years alone, the number has more than tripled.

Active players range from Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld & Toll, an eminently respectable Washington, D.C. law firm that has humbled such corporate giants as Texaco, to small-time lawyers like Diane Leigh Davison, a solo practitioner who conducts her primary specialty in "entertainment" law out of an office in Baltimore. Cohen, Milstein boasts that it has assumed "the struggle for justice" for Holocaust victims on a pro-bono basis. Davison, for her part, expects remuneration: "You don't say to a surgeon, 'don't take your fee.'" And then there is Edward Fagan, an obscure personal-injury lawyer from San Antonio, Texas who claims to have signed up 31,000 clients in record time. For his role in the Swiss settlement, he submitted to the court a bill for $4 million, or $640 an hour. The average pension that Holocaust survivors today receive from the German government is $640 a *year*.

Elan Steinberg, the executive director of the World Jewish Congress, has warned that "Holocaust survivors are being exploited by a feeding frenzy of fee-grabbing lawyers." But his organization, too, has not shied away from eyebrow-raising tactics of its own—for example, against a Dutch insurance company named Aegon that during the war was forced by the SS to surrender all policies owned by Jews to a Nazi-controlled firm. Already at the time, the Dutch government-in-exile declared such compulsory transactions null and void, and, beginning in the 1950's, Aegon, acting under Dutch law, moved to provide restitution to those who had been robbed. The firm, moreover, participated in successful negotiations with the Dutch Jewish community to establish a fund to cover any additional claims that might come to light.

Despite this eminently defensible record, last year the WJC launched an aggressive campaign against Aegon, insisting that it join the Eagleburger commission or face a boycott of its American-based subsidiaries. Aegon balked at this demand, maintaining that, as a company that had itself been a victim of the Nazis, it would not participate in an enterprise in which it would share equal culpability with Italian and German firms. "Our country suffered," Kees Storm, Aegon's chairman, told the *Financial Times*. "We are in a totally different position from other insurers." Nevertheless, the World Jewish Congress imposed its sanctions, with Steinberg promising to bring the company to its knees: "the insurance companies," he warned, "will be even easier" to target than the Swiss banks.

No less troubling than this ungrounded effort to bludgeon a company into submission—the WJC has never publicly referred to a single Holocaust-era insurance claim against Aegon that has gone unpaid—is the organization's attempt to wield Dutch wartime history as a club in its public-relations war against the insurer. Holland, according to the congressional testimony of Israel Singer, the secretary general of the WJC,

> had the worst record in Western Europe during the Holocaust—some 80 percent of its Jewish population was murdered. They were handed over by Dutch police. . . . The perception of Holland has been colored by the tragic Anne Frank story. But Anne Frank, who was betrayed and died in a Nazi concentration camp, had her furniture in the hidden annex removed by a Dutch moving company. So the failure of Aegon and the Dutch insurance companies is clearly bound up in the unwillingness to face the past—a failure of moral restitution.

It is, of course, indisputable that, in percentage terms, more Jews perished in Holland than anywhere else in Western Europe. In his outstanding *Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands, 1940-1945*, the British historian Bob Moore emphasizes the interplay of elements that helped to account for this disparity, among them the deeply ingrained deference to authority that characterized both the Dutch people and the Dutch Jews themselves; the fact that it was civilian Nazi officials who ruled Holland in the war years and not, as else-

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where in Western Europe, the Wehrmacht, thus giving a freer hand to the SS, the key instrument of Nazi genocide; and the continuation, during a temporary pause in deportations to Auschwitz from locations across Western Europe, of transports from Holland alone to the death factory of Sobibor. Indeed, Moore records in one highly relevant passage, "the Dutch victims of Sobibor more or less account for the percentage difference in mortality between the Netherlands and its nearest neighbors."

It is also true, as the WJC's Israel Singer observes, that there was extensive collaboration in the roundups and deportations of the Jews to the death camps, particularly by the Dutch police and the civil service, and in this respect the fate of Anne Frank was typical. But one cannot speak of Dutch collaborators without also taking note of the other side of the coin: the Dutch men and women who gave shelter to those forced to wear the yellow star, many of whom paid a terrible price for their pains. Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust museum and research institute, has kept a meticulously researched record, broken down by country, of the men and women who came to the aid of persecuted Jews in occupied Europe. In absolute numbers of such "righteous gentiles," tiny Holland outstrips all the countries of Western and Central Europe *combined*. Holland, moreover, was the *only* country in Nazi occupied Europe to witness a general strike in response to Nazi depredations against the Jews, a heroic and costly move that tragically failed to affect the Nazi resolve to hunt down and murder every last Jew in the land.

One can hardly say that the Dutch had an unblemished record during World War II; far from it. And in the aftermath they were often as callous as they could be to the relative handful of Jews who returned alive. Still, the image we have of the "good Dutchman" is not simply a myth to be torn away. To assert without qualification that the Netherlands had "the worst record in Western Europe during the Holocaust" is wickedly to blacken the name of a country that, from the bombing of Rotterdam in 1940 to the hunger winter of 1944-45, itself suffered grievously in the war. One would expect an organization attempting to right a historical wrong to acknowledge, and honor, its special obligation to historical truth.

As CLOUDED as are the issues presented by the claims against insurance companies, an even more complex case is presented by Switzerland. In pursuing the Swiss banks, major Jewish organizations have loosed the most forceful weapons in their arsenal, including class-action lawsuits, boycott threats, and barrages of adverse publicity. The World Jewish Congress has again taken the lead, lambasting the Swiss in forum after forum for sins ranging from gold laundering to the failure to admit refugees. It has also published a series of hard-hitting pamphlets, with titles like *The Sinister Face of "Neutrality": The Role of Swiss Financial Institutions in the Plunder of European Jewry*, that detail instances of misconduct during and after the war.

Summing up the overall charge, Edgar Bronfman testified before Congress that, contrary to received wisdom, the Swiss were "far from neutral" in the war:

> Their assistance to the Nazi war machine, through the clandestine conversion of looted gold into Swiss francs, enabled the Germans to buy fuel and other raw materials they needed to prolong the war. Some estimates in testimony before the U.S. Senate hearings following the war suggest the cost may have been staggering in the lives of American soldiers, Allied soldiers, Jews, and other civilians across that continent.

What are we to make of this indictment?

Clearly, the picture of wartime Switzerland as a kind of happy haven, encapsulated in the Broadway show *The Sound of Music*, has long been in need of adjustment. But in its place has come a mirror-image caricature that does no greater justice to historical reality. As with the Dutch, the actual record of the Swiss is very checkered.

Thus, a case can be made—and has been made by, among others, Angelo Codevilla in a new book*—that, surrounded on all sides by the Nazis and their allies and vulnerable to invasion, Switzerland acted from necessity when it served as a banker for the Third Reich. It is also reasonably clear that Switzerland did not violate international law merely by trading with Nazi Germany, which was in any event again not a matter of choice. On this point international law is fairly straightforward: neutral countries are permitted to engage in commercial relations with belligerents so long as the government itself does not participate in such trade and so long as none of the belligerents is given special favor. For the most part, Switzerland complied with these two conditions.

The Swiss did violate international law in another way—by trading in Nazi *gold*, which they had reason to know had been looted from the treasuries of Germany's victims (although there is no evidence suggesting they knew that some of the gold had been

* *Between the Alps and a Hard Place*. Regnery, 288 pp., $27.95.

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taken from death-camp inmates). This violation, however, was in effect cured, legally if not morally, by the Washington Accord of 1946, in which the Swiss agreed to settle Allied claims in exchange for a contribution of $58 million ($500 million in today's dollars) to the reconstruction of Europe.

This sum was paid only after much kicking and screaming; but it was not a particularly large amount, and from our present vantage point the Swiss would seem to have gotten off far too easily. Even so, however, some additional considerations are relevant. Washington was hardly in the dark about the true nature of Switzerland's gold transactions, having obtained through decryption of diplomatic communications and other means a generally comprehensive picture of Bern's activities. In signing a binding accord, then, the U.S. government was not snookered. And the Truman administration had solid reasons of its own for avoiding a major breach with Switzerland, the one wholly intact country in the heart of Europe in the chaotic year 1946.

But international law aside, was Swiss neutrality itself not an ethical disgrace? This, as it happens, is the gravamen of a 1997 U.S. government report prepared by the office of Stuart Eizenstat, which also points out that Nazi Germany "was a mortal threat to Western civilization itself, and had it been victorious, to the survival of even the neutral countries themselves."

That the Swiss were free riders on the Allied war effort is indisputably the case, but it is difficult to imagine what kind of useful contribution a belligerent Switzerland—a nation of 5 million—could have made to the defeat of Nazi Germany; in all likelihood, a major portion of the country would have been conquered within days and, among other consequences, the Jews of Switzerland would have been rounded up and shipped away, never to return. As things stood, moreover—and as no lesser an authority than Winston Churchill would later attest—neutral Switzerland was not without considerable value to the Allies, too: as a trading partner (in gold, as with the Germans), an espionage porthole, and a "protecting power" for German-held Allied prisoners of war. To reprove Swiss neutrality from an office in Washington five decades after the fact, without considering the alternative and what it would have entailed, is to indulge in the worst kind of armchair moralizing.

As for Switzerland's exclusionary immigration policy, it was arguably no worse than that of many other countries during the war. (The United States itself hardly has a glorious record in this department.) But there can also be no blinking some of the terrible things done by the Swiss, like the encouragement given to the German authorities in 1938 to stamp the passports of Jews with a "J" in order to help the Swiss border control keep out terrified refugees fleeing for their lives. Although some have denied anti-Semitism was prevalent in Switzerland in this period, and Codevilla goes so far as to say that no Swiss officials wanted to put their names on "a policy of exclusion of Jews per se," a profusion of easily obtainable documents belies such apologetics. Nor was it just low-level bureaucrats who instructed, as in one crucial circular, that the passports of those "who are Jewish or probably Jewish" should be stamped "turned back." Such policies flowed from the very top, and were approved unanimously by the Federal Council, the highest decisionmaking body in the land.

GOLD LAUNDERING and a pinched or anti-Semitic refugee policy undoubtedly constitute the blackest mark on Switzerland's wartime history. But the irresistible lure both to class-action lawyers and to Jewish organizations has been not these but the dormant bank accounts belonging to Holocaust victims. Thanks in large measure to an Independent Committee of Eminent Persons, set up in response to the growing clamor about these unrestituted funds and headed by Paul Volcker, the former chairman of the Federal Reserve, our understanding of this matter is much more complete than it was before the shouting began—and strikingly at variance with the picture we have been given.

The Volcker committee examined the records of some 254 Swiss banks that operated during the period 1933 to 1945, covering every institution likely to have had foreign depositors. It scrutinized some 4.1 million accounts, or 60 percent of the total from those years (the records for the other 40 percent no longer exist). From these, the commission attempted to cull accounts matching the names on lists of Nazi victims provided by Yad Vashem. In all, the auditors found some 53,886 accounts bearing what they cautiously describe as "a probable or possible relationship to victims of Nazi persecution."

This number is dramatically higher than all previous estimates given by the Swiss banks themselves—a 1962 survey turned up only 739 accounts, while in 1956 Swiss bankers had been able to find a paltry total of 86. The disparity is overwhelmingly the result of sheer bad faith on the part of the Swiss—but it is also a testament to the technical and legal problems wrapped up in this issue. For, even after the expenditure of almost a quarter of a billion dollars in what became the most expensive audit of all time (not even counting the sizable internal costs imposed on the

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banks themselves) and with the aid of a "fuzzy logic" algorithm and other advanced computational techniques, the Volcker audit itself encountered enormous difficulties in tying particular accounts to particular Holocaust victims with any certainty.

The report is properly severe in its judgments. Some banks, it concludes, did engage in "questionable and deceitful actions." These included "withholding of information from Holocaust victims or their heirs about their accounts, inappropriate closing of accounts, failure to keep adequate records." Then there were "many cases of insensitivity to the efforts of victims to claim dormant or closed accounts, and a general lack of diligence—even active resistance—in response to earlier private and official inquiries." Some of the more egregious instances of dissimulation and stonewalling involved the charging of extraordinary fees to those seeking information, or closing accounts in such a way as to complicate or rule out any future tracing of ownership.

On the other hand, the offending behavior was evidently limited to a relatively small number of banks and is not of recent vintage. Rather, it "took place years ago in a particularly difficult period with different banking standards." Significantly, the Volcker commission uncovered *no* evidence of "organized discrimination against the accounts of victims of Nazi persecution" or "concerted efforts to divert the funds of victims of Nazi persecution to improper purposes." Although many records could not be located, this could not be attributed "to systematic or widespread and deliberate alteration or destruction of bank-account records for the purpose of obliterating the history of the accounts of these victims." Indeed, in a stunning conclusion completely contrary to the picture drawn by the World Jewish Congress and the Western media, the commission reports "many cases" in which banks "actively sought out missing account holders or their heirs, including Holocaust victims, and paid the account balances of dormant accounts to the proper parties."

No less remarkable than this conclusion is the committee's analysis of the root cause of the problem, which, it avers, lay less in cupidity (though there was that, too) than in the underlying legal framework of the Swiss banking system. One pillar of that framework was, and remains, the secrecy rules that were adopted in the 1930's, ironically enough in large measure to protect the assets of persecuted German Jews. These secrecy laws then helped underpin the decision (later to become the subject of much criticism) "not to publish the names of the dormant account holders after World War II."

A second and no less important pillar was the absence of an escheat provision that would, as in most other countries, mandate the transfer of unclaimed banking assets to the state after a specified period of inactivity. This continuing anomaly in Swiss law has given rise to what the Volcker report calls "large numbers of dormant accounts even in settled times" and also, for the period in question, "very large amounts of dormant accounts completely unrelated to victims"—a circumstance from which the report concludes that "the banks, for the most part, treated foreign and domestic customers alike."

This lapidary finding puts paid to the notion that Swiss bankers deliberately sought to profit from the Holocaust. Although they clearly harbored their share of miscreants, for the most part their dereliction, characteristic of bankers, lay in applying the ordinary rules of procedure to an extraordinary situation. Thus, what can be said of them as a whole is that they failed to rise to the occasion, *and* that they made no systematic effort, until challenged, to resolve a glaring scandal.

Although one hesitates to compare, something similar can be said of other banks, including, as the *Jerusalem Post* and other news outlets have reported in great detail, local banks in Israel that have been found to be sitting on dormant accounts belonging to Holocaust victims. (Once again, avarice is not the cause; it is merely the intrinsic difficulties of determining who owns what.) And as the *Jerusalem Report* has recounted in a series of scathing articles, even the Claims Conference, whose vice president is Israel Singer and on whose board of directors sits Edgar Bronfman, has faced its share of unsightly entanglements in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities—principally by failing adequately to inform actual property owners or their heirs of their rights to unclaimed property that then fell to the Conference to dispose of as it wished. In short, in managing large sums of money belonging to the dead, even the best-intentioned bodies can fall prey to procedures and incentives that can make them *appear* as self-serving and heartless as the Swiss banks.

IN BRINGING this inquiry to a close, let us leave aside the "fee-grabbing" lawyers, who are doing what such lawyers, for better or worse, are nowadays wont to do. But has the organized Jewish community itself been pursuing Holocaust claims in a legitimate manner?

It is indisputable that without the aggressive campaign waged by the World Jewish Congress and its affiliates, many of the restitution efforts in train today would never have been set in motion. Although much of the money promised in the 1990's

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remains tied up in litigation and bureaucratic wrangling, if and when it begins to flow freely it might yet benefit the dwindling group of Holocaust survivors dispersed around the world, many of whom, particularly in Eastern Europe and the USSR, are said to be destitute and forsaken.

But consider what else has been set in motion. There is, to begin with, the questionable nature of at least some of the claims themselves, especially those that have been settled en bloc and under duress by banks or corporations anxious to avoid an unceasing notoriety and/or to continue doing business in the United States. As we have seen in the case of the insurance companies, the issues are so tangled as inescapably to inject uncertainty into the validity of any given claim, with questions arising about the timely payment of premiums, the existence of reinsurance guarantees, the effect of currency devaluations, and so forth. And as we have seen with the dormant bank accounts, the Volcker committee's authoritative report clearly refutes the accusation that the Swiss bankers engaged in widespread and systematic larceny.

If anything, indeed, the Volcker report highlights the suspect nature of a good number of the claims for compensation that have been streaming in ever since this issue was highlighted in the 1990's. Through a campaign of public statements and paid advertisements, Jews around the world have been actively solicited to locate their names on lists of dormant bank-account holders and unpaid insurance policies. More, they have been given the impression that filing a claim is a moral imperative, a way of seeing justice done.

The Volcker report itself expresses serious reservations about publishing lists of accounts, which carries a "greater implication of widespread insensitive and even unethical behavior than is warranted by the facts," and invites "frivolous claims" that can "clog the claims-resolution process [and] delay justice rather than serving the legitimate claimants." An independent tribunal of distinguished jurists has been at work evaluating claims against the Swiss banks, and has already denied some *80 percent* of them. But the organizations are pursuing an agenda of their own, and have been deterred not at all by the undifferentiated scramble for compensation they have unleashed.

QUITE APART from the merits or demerits of individual claims, that agenda may be inflicting injuries ever more costly to Jewish interests. When, in the early 1950's, Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion asked the Israeli people to come along with him in accepting reparations from Germany, he did so reluctantly and for the weightiest of reasons: namely, to obey the "final injunction of the inarticulate six million, whose very murder was a ringing cry for Israel to rise, to be strong and prosperous, to safeguard her peace and security, and so prevent such a disaster from ever again overwhelming the Jewish people." Does even a shadow of such a vital imperative exist today?

Assuredly, the restitution effort now being pushed forward by U.S.-based Jewish organizations contributes nothing to Israel's security. Conceivably, it may even harm it. For many years now, Germany, Holland, and Switzerland have been staunch supporters of Israel in a Europe that has been less than friendly to the Jewish state. The arm-twisting, the threats of boycott, the bad press—some of it undeserved, and some of it undertaken for the naked aim of extracting money—cannot but leave a distinct impression on European minds.

Stoking the fires of anti-Semitism on the far Right is only one and by no means the most significant danger. The real peril comes not from the fringe but from the damage done in the European political center. Countries that fail to fall into line, Israel Singer has warned, will be "publicly attacked and humiliated," and on more than a few occasions his organization has made good on this threat. When moments of strain come along, as when Israel's Arab adversaries come shopping for advanced weapons systems, will the nations that have been "publicly attacked and humiliated" be ready to do the right thing? It is impossible to say for sure, but one senses that moral and political capital has been heedlessly squandered.

An injury of another sort may be done to relations between Jews and non-Jews. With the exception of the forced laborers and some other currently favored groups like Gypsies, homosexuals, and the mentally ill, both European corporations and Jewish organizations have said embarrassingly little about the great numbers of non-Jews who were deprived of life, limb, and property at the hands of the Nazis. But if banks and insurance companies, in particular, have unpaid obligations, they have them to all of their murdered customers with whom they had valid contracts. Obviously, the firms do not wish to widen their exposure to thousands upon thousands of more claims, and Jewish organizations are fighting first and foremost for Jewish interests.

So they should; that is their job, and besides, the fate of the Jews, it hardly needs emphasizing, was singularly terrible. Nevertheless, to lead or partici-

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pate in a process through which some are given restitution while others in similar circumstances, but on the wrong set of lists, are not, is to sow the seeds of needless acrimony and to court censure on grounds to which Jews of all people should be especially sensitive.

PRUDENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS of this sort are by no means the end of it; at stake also is Jewish honor, violated in several ways. For one thing, we have been witnessing the spectacle of American Jewish organizations teaming up with politicians whose tears for the six million are exquisitely synchronized with their need for campaign contributions and applauding headlines. A bipartisan complement of this breed will attend the black-tie reparations banquet at the Waldorf-Astoria, an exercise in self-congratulation that promises to drag the mass murder of European Jewry into ethnic politics at its crassest.

For another and much graver thing, there are those indigent survivors languishing in isolation while their claims are laboriously processed. The Jewish community has a proud history, extending across millennia, of taking care of its own, buttressed by a voluminous legal and moral literature on the sacred obligation to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and ransom the captive. Can it really be that, at the very moment when American Jewry has been investing millions of dollars in the construction of Holocaust museums and memorials in every city and suburb of the United States, and when hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent digging through European banking archives, these suffering souls have been kept waiting for Swiss and German money to materialize? Yet so we have been solemnly assured by those spearheading the press for Holocaust restitution. If what they say is false, merely a public-relations ploy, then the pursuit of "blood money," in Menachem Begin's withering phrase, will have ended by casting into disrepute Jewish integrity; if what they say is true, it will have ended by casting into disrepute Jewish self-respect as well.

And finally there is the damage done to our understanding of history, to which I have already alluded. In testimony before Congress earlier this year, Israel Singer declared that "the importance of financial restitution must not overshadow the priority of moral restitution—the honest confrontation and accounting of the past." Unfortunately, he and his associates have rendered any such "honest confrontation" all the more difficult. History is not clay to be molded this way or that in the service of a cause, no matter how worthy, and treating it as such only eases the way for extremists of Left and Right to reshape the past toward their own, entirely different ends, including the end of proclaiming that the Holocaust, like everything else touching upon the Jews, was just about money after all.

Some of these extremists have accused the organized Jewish world of engaging in gangster tactics. One can only hope that the venom of such attacks will not deter other, more responsible voices from issuing criticism when and in whatever measure it is due. Thus far, alas, only a few such voices have been heard. "The pursuit of billions in Holocaust guilt money," warns Charles Krauthammer with characteristic directness, "has gone from the unseemly to the disgraceful." To Abraham Foxman, the reduction of the Holocaust to a matter of dollars and cents amounts to a "desecration" and "too high a price to pay for a justice we will never achieve."

They are right. It is past time to reconsider.

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What Is Wrong with Gay Marriage

Stanley N. Kurtz

A CLEAR majority of the American public opposes same-sex marriage, a social reform already making headway in a number of states. And yet this opposition, though real, is by and large silent. Just prior to the close vote on "civil unions" in the Vermont state assembly this past April, a number of anguished legislators pleaded for more time. Our society, they said, had only begun to consider the full implications of same-sex marriage; how could they be expected to make so fateful a decision in the absence of informed and substantive discussion? But the vote was taken anyway; the Vermont measure has passed into law; and still the hoped-for discussion has failed to materialize.

So striking is this general silence that one cannot help wondering about the reasons for it. They are not far to seek. In April, just after Reform rabbis had been authorized by their movement to conduct same-sex wedding ceremonies, and as Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians were debating whether to do likewise, a story appeared in the *New York Times* about three respected and moderately liberal Protestant theologians known to be opposed to such a move who had been invited to air their views on television. All three had declined to appear, and on more or less the same grounds: fear of being publicly smeared as "homophobic."

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In a democracy, Tocqueville warned, the threat of social ostracism can be too easily turned against minority viewpoints. How curious, then, to see it being deployed so effectively today against the majority. True, even a relatively small group of deeply committed partisans can always impose certain costs on its adversaries, and the cause of same-sex marriage is certainly one to which gay activists and their allies are deeply committed. True, too, the positions espoused by these activists are generally supported by the American cultural elite, including the mainstream media, which exercise a powerful censoring role of their own. But one also senses that the silencing of the majority would never have been possible were the majority itself more certain of its ground.

Although most Americans are indeed opposed to the legalization of same-sex marriage, large numbers of these same Americans do not consider homosexuality itself a sin, and they welcome greater tolerance for homosexuals. Favoring equality, they do not wish to see anyone denied his rights. It is the seeming ambiguity in this position that has been seized upon by activists to stigmatize any opposition to same-sex marriage as evidence of homophobia, or prejudice against homosexuals per se. But a fairer way of putting it would be to say that we have allowed a muddled understanding of democracy to subvert our capacity to speak on behalf of those human forms and traditions upon which democracy itself crucially depends.

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NOT THAT the arguments in favor of same-sex marriage are themselves models of clarity. Quite the contrary: they have shifted with the moment, and with their proponents' sense of political expediency.

Perhaps the most articulate of these proponents is the British-born Andrew Sullivan, who just over a decade ago launched his campaign for same-sex marriage in the pages of the *New Republic*, the magazine of which he was then the editor. True to his self-description as a conservative, Sullivan put forward a conservative argument. Marriage, he proclaimed, is an institution worthy of preservation, and society is correct to extend legal advantages to couples who choose to live under its formal sanction. For marriage provides a counterbalance to sexual adventurism, especially male sexual adventurism, and thus serves to encourage the socially beneficial ends of emotional stability, economic security, and a healthy environment in which to rear the next generation. But *precisely for that reason*, Sullivan concluded, the legal benefits of marriage ought to be extended to gays as well, who if anything stand in even greater need of its ameliorating spirit than do heterosexuals, and who could contribute most to society if brought under the healing embrace of bourgeois respectability.

Would homosexuals actually choose to marry? Sullivan, after all, was speaking of a community—his own community—that has put a premium on sexual promiscuity, as well as on rebellion against everything subsumed under the word "proper." Not to worry, he reassured his readers: while some gay activists and a number of aging radicals might cling to an outdated notion of homosexuals as the quintessential outsiders, in the community as a whole the impulse to rebel was giving way to the impulse to belong. Indeed, his "guess" was that, if only the straight world would accept them, many would happily wed—and they might well prove to be more committed marriage partners than heterosexuals themselves. At the very least, by turning marriage into a shared institution, America could heal the gay/straight rift, make headway against the scourge of AIDS, and ensure that a restless and endangered class of citizens would be happier, more productive, and better cared for.

Several years later, Sullivan fleshed out this argument in a book, *Virtually Normal*, which garnered generally enthusiastic reviews. It also attracted at least two vigorous counterresponses: one by James Q. Wilson in COMMENTARY ("Against Homosexual Marriage," March 1996) and a shorter piece by William J. Bennett in *Newsweek*. Bennett raised the interesting possibility that Sullivan's "guess" might prove wrong—that legalized marriage would not in fact domesticate gays but rather the reverse: that an often openly and even proudly promiscuous population would fatally undermine an already weakened institution by breaking the bond between marriage and the principle of monogamy. Besides, Bennett asked, once we arbitrarily redefine marriage to take in couples of the same sex, what would be the stopping point? Why not legalize polygamy, even incest?

This last point Sullivan himself was, in turn, quick to disparage as irrational fear-mongering, likening it to the disaster scenarios trotted out decades earlier during the debate over interracial marriage. "To the best of my knowledge," he scoffed in reply to Bennett, "there is no polygamist's rights organization poised to exploit same-sex marriage and return the republic to polygamous abandon."

But at the same time, Sullivan was already beginning subtly to shift ground. In the case of heterosexuals, he complained in his response to Bennett, we have never been in the habit of making "nitpicking assessments of who deserves the *right* to marry and who does not" (emphasis added); why do so in the case of homosexuals? This was a portent of things to come. From urging that the benefits of marriage be extended to gays as a matter of society's own self-interest—that is, in order to tame an antinomian force by, in effect, co-opting it—Sullivan and others soon began to build a case for gay marriage on the basis of human and civil rights.

Gone now was the earnest contention that marriage both solemnized and reinforced a worthy moral code. Gone, too, was any serious effort to show that gays, if allowed to marry, would adopt that code. In "State of the Union," a piece published in the *New Republic* earlier this year in the wake of the Vermont legislature's action, Sullivan conceded in one breath that many gay men had no interest in marriage with its expectations of fidelity, while insisting in the next that even if they did marry, the impact on the institution as a whole, given the tiny percentage of homosexuals in the population, would be negligible. But all that was beside the point, which was one of principle: in a free society, Sullivan declared, we allow anyone to marry who so wishes. And although we naturally hope for the best from all those marriages, the actual outcome is irrelevant; marriage itself is an elementary right, and to deny it to anyone, not only in substance but in name (by adopting such halfway measures as domestic partnerships or civil unions), is a species of discrimination, pure and simple.

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Thus the "debate" so far. To judge by the silence on the other side, the proponents of same-sex marriage would seem to have won hands down, no matter which argument they happen to base themselves on at any given moment. In instructing the state legislature last December to authorize either same-sex marriage or, as the closest thing to it, civil unions, Vermont's supreme court unabashedly invoked what it called a "recognition of our common humanity" as the ground for its decision. "Our common humanity": who could be so retrograde, or so callous, as to say no to *that*?

But the fact is that our common humanity has nothing to do with the case. After all, we recognize a common humanity with all sorts of people, some of them even criminals, to whom we would not consider extending many of the normal benefits of society. As a social and legal institution, marriage exists not because it is a universal right but only because, historically, certain human communities have decided that this particular form of personal alliance between a man and a woman both needs and deserves societal encouragement. In fact, a rights-based argument, if it were honest, would *reject* this social favoritism altogether, calling instead for the abolition of state-sponsored marriage and, perhaps, its replacement by contracts in which personal alliances of any kind would be arranged solely by the parties concerned, in whatever number or gender, and with whatever associated responsibilities, they saw fit to stipulate.

Of course, advocates of same-sex marriage do not (generally) espouse so radical a position. But neither do they concede what is manifestly the case: that they already have the same legal right to marry as everybody else—to marry, that is, members of the opposite sex. What they claim instead is a new right: the right to reconfigure the conditions of marriage in such a way as to change its very definition, while denying they are doing any such thing. And this right to reconfigure marriage in favor of gays is indeed tantamount, just as Bennett warned, to a right to reconfigure it in favor of polygamists, or pederasts, or practitioners of incest—do we not share a common humanity with each of them?—and thus, in effect, to eliminate heterosexual monogamous marriage as a legal and, ultimately, a social category. As we shall see, at least some advocates of same-sex marriage are frank enough to say so.

What we are thrown back on, in other words, are the fundamental questions of what marriage is, and what it is for. It was the answers to these questions that gave rise to the determination in the West to give a privileged status to monogamous heterosexual unions in the first place, and even though those millennia-old answers may have been momentarily forgotten, or have fallen into disrepute, they remain as sound and as compelling as ever.

In a great many non-Western cultures, polygamy and polyandry (a marriage of one woman and several men) have long existed; it is even possible that the great majority of human societies throughout history have allowed polygamy even if most did not practice it. By contrast, monogamous heterosexual marriage arose for specific reasons, of which the more venerable has to do with the complementarity of the sexes and the more recent with the fundamental liberal belief in the primacy of the individual. If we begin with the second of these, that is only because it is the less controversial.

Societies that practice polygamy tend to be built around life within groups, where the rights of the individual are subordinated to the honor and fate of the clan or joint family. Marriages in such societies are undertaken not so much to join forever with a distinctive beloved but first and foremost to further alliances between families and clans, and the children of these marriages are raised less by their parents alone than by some larger association of kin. Hillary Clinton's favorite proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," is meaningful in just these sorts of settings, which may indeed be stable, and which are certainly complex, but where the chief source of authority is not the individual but the group.

That our own society is rather different hardly needs to be demonstrated. In the modern period, families in the West are for the most part based not on large associations of kin with whom we live cheek by jowl but rather on deeply personal ties established over time between two unique individuals. These emotionally intimate ties are the fundamental glue of Western marriage, which is monogamous not only because it represents the free choice of autonomous persons but because anything other than monogamy would fatally undercut the primacy of the individual and force us back either into social chaos or into the straitjacket of large, rule-bound groups.

To be sure, individualism like every other form of human expression can be carried to excess, and in ways that promote its own subversion. The same regard for our individual uniqueness that pushes in favor of romantic love can, if unbridled by other considerations, make us chafe at any restrictions whatsoever on our freedom, enticing us to believe

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that we can have whomsoever we desire, whenever it strikes our fancy, and no matter what prior obligations we may have undertaken to any one person. "The heart wants what it wants," said Woody Allen famously, at a moment when he was upending his own family arrangements dramatically. But that too is precisely why society has stepped in to reinforce, through the legalized institution of marriage, the notion of committed romantic love: that is, the side of individualism that draws men and women together rather than the side that pulls them restlessly apart. Its interest in doing so goes beyond the stake every society has in settled order; the fact is that the continuity of these two-person bonds is, once again, all that stands between our children and chaos.

What, one may ask, does this have to do with homosexuality? After all, as proponents of same-sex marriage remind us, gay couples can be drawn together by romantic love, and stay together, too. And at least some homosexual couples have children as well—through adoption or artificial insemination, or from previous marriages. Not only that, but nobody bars heterosexual couples who are sterile or childless from getting or staying married. Maybe there is good reason for marriage to be monogamous; does that mean it also has to be exclusively heterosexual?

BUT THAT brings us to the complementarity of the sexes, a concept so politically incorrect that even to mention it these days is to invite ridicule. For if it implies anything, the complementarity of the sexes implies that men and women are different—and that, where the formation of families and the rearing of children are concerned, heterosexual parents are and should be preferred to homosexual parents: two ideas that are anathema to radical feminists and gay activists alike. Nevertheless, whether it is a biologically based fact or a cultural artifact, or both, the complementarity of the sexes is real, and it is not about to disappear. And a good thing, too, since the stability of marriage depends on it.

In speaking of the complementarity of the sexes, I do not have in mind the old "division of the spheres"—the doctrine that, to put it crudely, men's natural place is to occupy themselves with labor outside the home while women's natural bent is to care for hearth and children. But neither is that idea to be lightly disparaged. True, increasing numbers of women work outside the home these days, and their access to prestigious and highly remunerative jobs is approaching that of men. But when it comes to sex and marriage, the old patterns, the old attitudes, and the old instincts stubbornly refuse to lie down and die. The woman who pulls down a six-figure salary still waits for a man to call for a date, and the woman who comfortably commands men at the office still waits for a man to hold the door open for her. In our fantasies and in the details of our intimate lives, as in our popular songs, the complementarity of the sexes lives on, and will not be eradicated.

This complementarity is absolutely crucial for married life. To Andrew Sullivan, it is the institution of marriage itself that "domesticates" men. But he has it wrong, or at best half-right: it is women who domesticate men. This is hardly to say that women themselves are never promiscuous; it is to say, rather, that what characteristically leads a man to abandon the quest for sexual conquest and, as the phrase has it, settle down and raise a family is the companionship and (yes) the possession of a beloved woman. Upon this basic dynamic of sexual coupling, society puts its imprimatur in the form of legalized marriage and, at least until recently, has also put its sanctions in the laws regulating divorce, laws that were typically much harder on men as the "naturally" promiscuous partners than on women.

There is still another aspect to the complementarity of the sexes that might be mentioned in this context, and that is hierarchy. If a man's proprietary interest in wife and family—his sense of possession and responsibility—is what both induces and permits him to give up the restless search for sexual conquest, the maintenance of this interest depends on, at a minimum, the tokens of entitlement suggested (again, however risibly to feminists and others) by the image of a home as a castle and the father and husband as its king. Of course, everyone knows and has always known that this kingship is more often symbolic than real: a rough sort of equality has always lain hidden under the idea of heterosexual hierarchy, and the question of who is the conqueror and who the conquered as between men and women is one of the oldest themes of high literature and folk humor alike. There is plenty of winning and losing all around.

But, to put it plainly, what the Promise Keepers have the audacity to say out loud about a man's authority within the marriage bond remains, in subtler form, the formula of heterosexual marital success. The mere fact that, to the abiding frustration of feminists, 90 percent of married American women still take their husbands' surnames, while only 2 percent retain their maiden names alone, is powerful testimony to the enduring relevance of this ageless and complex drama of pursuit and possession

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by means of which individual men and women complete and "own" one another exclusively.

In sum, to suppose that legally conferring the word "marriage" on the union of two gay men will somehow magically domesticate them both is to indulge in fantasy; only sexual complementarity can do that. The state can reinforce the effect, but it cannot create it out of whole cloth.

In saying all this, I am merely reiterating something that heterosexual men and women have always known. More significantly, it is something that at least one segment of the homosexual community has been similarly frank to affirm: the segment, that is, that acknowledges the difference between heterosexuality and homosexuality. In contrast to moderates and "conservatives" like Andrew Sullivan, who consistently play down that difference in order to promote their vision of gays as monogamists-in-the-making, radical gays have argued—more knowledgeably, more powerfully, and more vocally than any opponent of same-sex marriage would dare to do—that homosexuality, and particularly male homosexuality, is by its very nature incompatible with the norms of traditional monogamous marriage.

Such people are represented most prominently in the trendy academic discipline known as "queer theory." Some of them simply scoff at the idea of same-sex marriage as a contradiction in terms, and will have nothing to do with it. But for others, the prospect of legalizing same-sex marriage is in fact quite attractive—because, in making a mockery of the forms and traditions of monogamous unions, it holds out the promise of eventually undoing the institution altogether.

Take, for instance, Gretchen Stiers, a lesbian theorist and advocate of gay marriage: "Two women or two men who marry subvert the belief that women and men take on separate but complementary roles with marriage and overtly resist the notion that marriage functions to support specifically defined gender roles." Indeed, in her recent book, *From This Day Forward*, the best study to date of gay and lesbian attitudes on these matters, Stiers shows that many homosexuals who disdain the idea of conventional marriage or even "commitment ceremonies" would nonetheless marry for the "bennies"—that is, the legal and financial benefits involved (such as shared health insurance). Far from reinforcing the marriage ideal, then, these couples would in effect be putting into practice the program of cultural "resistance and subversion" that she and other queer theorists favor.

Or take Michael Bronski, another radical advocate of same-sex marriage for whom "homophobia" is hardly an irrational prejudice but a "completely rational fear." After all, writes Bronski, homosexuality posits "a sexuality that is justified by pleasure alone" and that is "completely divorced from the burden of reproduction"; as such, it "strikes at the heart of the organization of Western culture and societies," destabilizing both monogamous marriage and the role of two sexually complementary parents within the nuclear family.

Nor does one have to look only to the radicals for a recognition of the subversive potential of gay marriage. William Eskridge, who like Andrew Sullivan lauds its power to tame and civilize promiscuous gay men, also frankly hopes that the institutionalization of same-sex marriage will in turn encourage a greater experimentation with all family forms. Gay marriages are bound to be more "fluid," in Eskridge's term, not so much because homosexual men will be less constrained by notions of fidelity but because, where children are concerned, sperm donors and others will be incorporated into "novel family configurations." Thanks to the example set by these "configurations," we can look forward to all sorts of beneficial changes in the structure of Western marriage.

From this perspective, in short, gay marriage represents but a critical first step toward the legitimation of multipartner marriages and then, perhaps, the eventual elimination of state-sanctioned marriage as we have known it. Once gay male couples with open sexual relationships or lesbian couples with de-facto families are legally married, the way will be open to even more imaginative combinations. On what grounds, for instance, could the sperm donor and aging rock star David Crosby be denied the right to join in matrimony with both the lesbian rock singer Melissa Etheridge and her lover Julie Cypher, the "mothers" of his child?

Enter, now, polygamy, an idea so outrageously offensive to Andrew Sullivan that he held William J. Bennett up to scorn for raising it a few short years ago. But those same years, as it happens, have seen the rise of a movement, known delicately as "polyamory," many of whose proponents are indeed "poised," in Sullivan's derisive words, "to exploit same-sex marriage and return the republic to polygamous abandon."

Although exact numbers are hard to come by, and one does not wish to exaggerate, one measure of the growth of the polyamorist idea is the jump in Web-based support groups from three to up-

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ward of 250. A polyamorist organization, Loving More, now holds two conferences a year, and a magazine under the same name claims a circulation of 10,000 and growing. The movement even boasts a cause célèbre in the case of April Divilbiss, a woman living openly with two "husbands" whose "immoral life-style" resulted in a court's awarding custody of her child to a grandparent. A defense fund has been set up for her, and the case has attracted the usual media attention, figuring centrally, for example, in the full-page article *Time* magazine devoted to the polyamorist movement last year.

The most common form of polyamory is "couple-centered," essentially an updated version of that ill-fated experiment of the 70's, the "open marriage." Couples attend sex parties together or meet prospective partners through ads or Internet chat rooms. Some prefer three-way sex, while others have sex only with other couples; some insist on the presence of their "spouse," while others permit one partner to go off on his or her own, on condition that no emotional involvement will ensue. (Of course, exactly as in open marriage, these outside relationships frequently lead, inside, to jealousy and breakup.) Although polyamorist couples are predominantly heterosexual, homosexuals are involved as well.

In addition to the couple-centered kind, which is perhaps familiar enough, there are two more innovative forms of polyamorous relationship: so-called group marriages, and networks of sexual connection that are even more open and "fluid" (to use William Eskridge's word). Group marriages can consist of anywhere between three and six adults who live together, sharing finances, children, and household responsibilities. Every adult is expected to be in a sexual relationship with others in the group, and if bisexuals are involved they may have sex with both men and women. The groups themselves are usually closed, although new members can join if all the existing partners agree. In the still looser forms of "polyfidelity," the group forms and re-forms according to shifting tastes and sexual orientations. Polyamory websites regularly describe multipartner sexual liaisons among gay, straight, and bisexual individuals.

Needless to say, the loss of autonomy and the high potential for conflict in all of these arrangements do not exactly make for stability, and (as in 60's-style communes) one can well imagine that the fate of the children involved is particularly harsh. But that hardly deters the enthusiasts, who, spurred by the success of the gay-marriage movement, see legalized polyamory as the wave of the future. One such enthusiast, a de-facto polyamorist though she may never have heard the word, is the respected mainstream feminist Barbara Ehrenreich, who has forecast the rise of a whole variety of personal arrangements entered into voluntarily by consenting parties and protected by law. Although entry into and exit from these associations would be free, the marriage contract as we know it would be replaced by a parenting contract in which the parties agreed to provide in perpetuity for whatever offspring might emerge from their shifting liaisons; as for the children themselves, they could be raised in, for example, mixed-sex communes whose residents were both gay and straight.

Ehrenreich and the polyamorists are hardly unaware of the liabilities attendant upon their utopian schemes. Polyamory websites are filled with chatter about techniques for overcoming the effects of sexual jealousy, as, again and again, the seething passion for open-ended emotional exploration yields agonies of personal humiliation and betrayal, not to mention the smash-up of innocent children's lives (which does in fact usually go unmentioned). But, bringing us full circle, the polyamorists also insist there must be a cure for this debility: if other cultures can do it, we can, too. After all, they point out helpfully, many Pacific Island societies have permitted multiple and shifting sexual unions, and the majority of non-Western cultures also feature complex networks of aunts, uncles, and other kin to nurture the children. Why not us?

Why not, indeed? For sheer amusement, it would almost be worth it to see how long a fiercely willful feminist like Barbara Ehrenreich would last in a real Pacific Island society, with its tightly bound groups of kin, its intricate rules of respect, its complex and often rigid hierarchies, and its constant demands for personal sacrifice. Indeed, it is tempting to laugh at all these laborious re-creations, whether in theory or in practice, of some of the most disastrous social experiments of the last 40 years. But they are even less laughable this time around than they were in the 1960's and 70's. For now, in the form of the movement for legalized gay marriage, the machinery of the state itself has, for the first time, been mobilized to sanction, bless, and protect those very same experiments.

ULTIMATELY, IT may be that what lies behind the demand for same-sex marriage, whether couched in conservative or in "civil-rights" terms, is a bid to erase entirely the stigma of homosexuality. That bid is utopian; as radical gays like Michael Bronski acknowledge, the stigma arises from the

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fundamental separation between homosexuality and reproduction, which is to say from the fundamental fact that the world is, for the overwhelming part, heterosexual. Nevertheless, in pursuit of this utopian end, we are being asked to transform, at unknown cost to ourselves and to future generations, the central institution of our society. And we are being admonished that to reject this demand is to repudiate our "common humanity" with those who are advancing it: that is, to repudiate them as persons.

That is simply not so. There is not the slightest evidence that either the civil status of homosexuals or the increased sympathy and respect they now enjoy in America will in the least suffer from a continued refusal to redefine marriage so as to include homosexual unions. The real danger, rather, lies in the opposite direction—in the emptying-out of every last vestige of meaning from an institution already under siege by the disintegrative sexual and social forces of the last decades. If ever there was a place to draw a line, this is it.

"What is distinctive about marriage," wrote James Q. Wilson four years ago in Commentary, "is that it is an institution created to sustain child-rearing." The reason that role is "entrusted in principle to married heterosexual couples," he added, is "because after much experimentation—several thousand years, more or less—we have found nothing else that works as well." It would be hard to improve on Wilson's quiet formulation of the case. Yet today, the war against this "institution created to sustain child-rearing"—that is, against marriage and the family—continues in force. Spearheaded by the campaign for same-sex unions, and under the reassuring but radically false guise of *preserving* marriage and the family, it is, in fact, intensifying. For that reason, among a host of others, it ought to be resisted—firmly, politely, but above all unashamedly.

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Peace for Our Time?

Donald Kagan and Frederick W. Kagan

In 1919, having just played a decisive role in winning the most devastating war yet fought, Great Britain stood at the height of its military power. Its armed forces were of unprecedented size, and the invention of the tank had given it a commanding technological lead over any potential rival. Such rivals were, at the moment, nowhere to be seen. England's archenemy, Germany, lay destroyed and helpless and, under the terms of the Versailles treaty, subject to a rigid disarmament regime. Russia, an enemy of even longer standing, had collapsed into bloody civil war and was even less likely than Germany to pose a challenge for the foreseeable future. In the Far East, England faced no European competitors, while Japan, the only indigenous power of significance, was a British ally. France and the United States, the most powerful states in the world after England, were so closely bound to it in friendship that war with them was unthinkable. Britain's leaders reckoned that no major conflict lay on the horizon for at least ten years.

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They were right about that. And yet, by the summer of 1940, a mere *twenty* years later, the situation had become completely reversed. Somehow, over the intervening two decades, Germany had arisen in arms once more, had overrun not only Eastern Europe but France as well, and was poised to strike England itself. Russia, too, had revived, and, following the Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact of 1939, seemed to be placing its massive and modernizing armed forces at Germany's disposal. America remained obstinately neutral. Japan, openly hostile, was engaged in subjugating China. England stood alone, vulnerable to the terrible new technologies of war that had been mastered, perfected, and readied by Germany for use against its former vanquisher. Night after night, with near-impunity, German bombers attacked homes and businesses in London and up and down the southeastern coast; civilians were killed indiscriminately, property obliterated. England seemed to be on the road to defeat, if not annihilation.

In 1991, the United States was in a position comparable to that of England in 1919. The Soviet Union, the adversary that had threatened at times to destroy us completely, had collapsed into chaos. In the Middle East, the much-vaunted army of Saddam Hussein had been decimated in a brief and, for America, virtually bloodless war, putting an end to the Iraqi dictator's bid for regional hegemony. The technologies used in the Gulf war, developed and perfected by us, conferred upon our

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forces a seeming omnipotence and invulnerability. Finally, with the exception of China, the most powerful nations in the world were now our allies and had just cooperated closely with us in defeating Saddam. The world stood in awe of America's military might.

That was in 1991. Where will America be at the end of *its* interwar period? Will we be ready for victory, or will we, like the England of 1940, face a struggle for survival for which we are unprepared?

No one can say for certain. The threat that might undo us is not yet visible on the horizon; if it were, one would like to think we would already have taken steps to meet it. But just here lies the greatest cause for alarm. In England, too, the threat could not be seen; yet partly for that reason, the English proceeded to pursue foreign and defense policies that led in a straight line to disaster. What is apparent from the vantage point of today is that, over the past decade, the United States has done precisely the same.

II

THE END of World War I did not instantly bring peace and stability to Europe, but the earliest trouble faced by the British was not on the Continent but in the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. First, in 1919, a rebellion broke out in British-held areas of Iraq. Then, in 1921, Mustafa Kemal, later to be known as Atatürk, made short work of Greek forces fighting in Turkey on Britain's behalf and was on the verge of annihilating British troops at Chanak on the Dardanelles. Next, in 1923, Italy attempted to seize the island of Corfu from Greece, and the newly created League of Nations, upon which the English had placed their hopes for world stability, proved powerless to intervene. Finally, in Europe itself, throughout the decade of the 20's, the democratic government of defeated Germany skillfully cheated on the disarmament provisions of the Versailles treaty—despite the presence on the ground of active disarmament inspectors.

Britain's response to each of these crises was inadequate. Although ground forces were sent to Iraq to put down the rebellion, they did not act swiftly enough, and neither was the British government willing to underwrite the larger garrison that alone would have guaranteed longer-term prospects of peace. Instead, Britain withdrew most of its forces under a deal with the insurgents that greatly weakened the stability of the entire area.

In Turkey, which was deemed partially responsible for having caused the recent world war, England had been determined to impose a draconian peace. But although the Ottoman government accepted British terms, rebels led by Kemal would not. Unwilling to commit its own forces, the English hoped to rely on the Greeks to do their fighting; Kemal routed these surrogates, and went on to face a small English contingent at Chanak. Although British diplomacy brought the crisis to an end, the resultant treaty with Turkey achieved few of the objectives England had sought at the beginning of the crisis.

Another would-be aggressor, Italy's new dictator Benito Mussolini, was even then taking note of these developments. In 1923, the murder of several Italian nationals on Greek territory led Mussolini to demand the payment of 50 million lira and an apology from the Greek government. When the Greeks refused, he decided to test the international waters with an attempted seizure of the island of Corfu. Though Italy's armed forces were no match for their own, the British once again forbore to act directly, instead calling upon the League of Nations.

Under British leadership, and with British muscle, the League of Nations might have been able to muster the international standing and support to prevail; but leadership and muscle were precisely what the British would not supply. For his part, Mussolini demanded that the issue be brought not to the League of Nations but instead to the Conference of Ambassadors, a body made up of the victorious powers in the world war and in which Italy's friends could be depended upon to exert their influence. And so it was. Although, in the end, Mussolini was required by the Conference to restore Corfu to the humiliated Greeks, he received both his apology and the monetary compensation he had demanded. The more important victims were the League of Nations and the cause of collective security, not to mention British prestige.

With every passing year, memories of British strength and determination gave way to a general perception of weakness, passivity, and lack of will. Germany, above all, rapidly concluded that the English were not willing to risk a fight even for their self-proclaimed vital interests, and this only fueled further violations of the critical disarmament provisions of the Versailles treaty—provisions that were essential to England's own long-term security. And yet, when clear evidence of a rearming Germany was periodically presented to the British government, it was just as regularly ignored, lest England be forced to do what its leaders were determined to avoid at all costs, namely, to rearm in turn. In 1925, with the signing of the Locarno treaty by England, France, and Germany, the

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whole matter was shelved. Germany had gotten away with it.

The Locarno treaty itself, whereby England promised to come to the aid either of France *or* of Germany in the event of an attack by the other, was a masterpiece of self-delusion. Far from affording a guarantee to France, as advertised, it paved the way for Germany's re-entry into the international community, allowing it to join the League of Nations despite the fact that it was clearly in violation of Versailles and more or less blatantly preparing to revise the postwar European settlement. On top of that, the Locarno treaty placed heavy new military obligations on England which, the British chiefs of staff duly protested, could not be met. Five years later, these same chiefs would warn that Britain was "in a less favorable position to fulfill the Locarno guarantees than it was, without any guarantee, to come to the assistance of France and Belgium in 1914."

The warning was ignored—and little wonder. For, throughout the 1920's, had not each crisis come to a seemingly satisfactory resolution? The Iraqi rebellion ended. The Turkish emergency was defused. Corfu was given back to the Greeks. Superficial amity was restored with Germany. A guarantee (of sorts) was given to France. It would have taken a greater degree of realism than most British leaders were willing or able to muster to acknowledge that the price paid for these "victories" was exorbitant.

But it was. The Iraq, Chanak, and Corfu crises had made it clear to potential aggressors that England would not fight to stop them, or stand behind the international agencies that had been created to prevent aggression. Failure to enforce the Versailles treaty had even more serious ramifications. Not only did it leave Germany with the basic infrastructure needed to rebuild its armed forces, but it created a serious cleavage with the French, who rightly concluded that Britain would not risk conflict on their behalf. Worse still, a succession of British leaders invoked the Locarno treaty to argue that there was no need *ever* to worry about another major European war. Throughout the 1920's, England slept, blissfully unaware of the dangers that lurked just around the corner.

Then came the 1930's, when the unthinkable not only became thinkable but actually occurred. The combination of military weakness and lack of political will led to England's timid responses to Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland, Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia, and Nazi Germany's seizure of Austria and Czechoslovakia.

The story of the 1930's—epitomized for many in the luckless phrase of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain upon his return from Munich in 1938, bringing "peace for our time"—has been told many times, and does not need to be repeated here. But it is the England of the 1920's, whose story is less well known, that teaches the more relevant lesson. For it was during that period of relative peace and seeming stability that the decisions were taken that shaped England's feeble responses in the catastrophic decade to follow.

III

A DECADE of relative peace and seeming stability has also followed the end of the cold war. Like Great Britain before it, America, too, seems to be on a path that will constrain its ability to act when the international situation deteriorates—as it is bound to do.

Consider Iraq, an early flashpoint for us as it was for the British. Despite the brilliant performance of American military forces in the Gulf war, the outcome of that conflict was rather less than decisive. Just as American leaders had repeatedly emphasized after the seizure of Kuwait, and before the commitment of American troops, long-term stability in the region clearly required the removal of Saddam Hussein. But the end of the war left him still in power, with the military tools at his disposal to suppress the various indigenous movements aimed at unseating him. The victorious allies were forced to take refuge in a peace that resembled Versailles in crucial ways, with economic sanctions to remain in place until Iraq had complied with a series of disarmament provisions to be verified by an international team of inspectors.

Like the post-World War I Germans, however, the Iraqis proved adept at diverting attention and at skillfully concealing their efforts to develop nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons as well as the missiles needed to deliver them. In these circumstances, the U.S. admittedly behaved somewhat better than had the British, periodically taking action (in the form of cruise-missile attacks on military targets) when the evidence of Iraqi malfeasance became unavoidable. At the same time, albeit with much resistance from its allies, the U.S. managed to sustain the economic sanctions on Iraq.

Still, the missile strikes were never quite sufficient to force Saddam into compliance, and the sanctions were ultimately undermined when the U.S. allowed Iraq to sell limited amounts of oil. In 1998, after a series of brazen Iraqi violations of the in-

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spection regime, the U.S. launched a large-scale, multiday attack. This, however, not only failed to destroy Iraq's well-hidden capabilities but put an end to inspections altogether. Iraq has now had more than a year-and-a-half to work freely on its illicit programs, and inspections are unlikely to be resumed. And so, in the end, a defeated power has once again retained the basic capabilities it needs to reconstitute itself as a highly dangerous military force.

IF FAILURE to carry through in punishing aggressors is one mark of similarity between the U.S. now and Great Britain then, another is the misplaced reliance on international organizations. In 1921, at the height of the crisis in Turkey, the leader of the British opposition, Bonar Law, had declared, "We cannot be the policeman of the world." His words were echoed almost exactly by President Clinton's first ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright. The United States, she said, in what would become one of the administration's favorite clichés, "is not the world's policeman."

And indeed throughout the 1990's America looked to the UN as the critical guarantor of international stability. But as in the past, the success of any such policy depended upon the willingness of the leading global power to put its diplomatic and military might behind its designated "policeman." In our case, this willingness was tested not only in Iraq but in Somalia, Bosnia, Korea, and Kosovo. Almost every one of these crises was resolved to our apparent satisfaction; but the real outcome in each case has been defeat.

By the early 1990's, civil war in Somalia had produced a widespread manmade famine, and in 1992 a UN peacekeeping force, headed by a large American contingent, entered the country to ensure the delivery of food. But when it became clear that an end to the emergency would require an even greater application of force, the U.S. under President George Bush balked at the prospect of Vietnam-style "mission creep." Then, under President Clinton, we expanded the mission of the peacekeepers while simultaneously reducing our own forces. The result was catastrophe: a raid that ended in the deaths of eighteen U.S. soldiers, television pictures of dead Americans being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, and, within months, the bolting of the U.S. contingent. Both American credibility and the UN's ability to function as the world's policeman had been seriously undermined.

Similarly in Bosnia, where both the Bush and the Clinton administrations at first failed to take action to stop a vicious civil war and then, after joining with the UN to intervene and force both sides to the negotiating table, failed to prevent the spread of conflict to Kosovo. Today, both Bosnia and Kosovo remain highly precarious, their stability maintained only by the continued presence of international peacekeepers. Having once again sought to avoid a Vietnam-like quagmire by postponing intervention and then proceeding with minimal force, we are now trapped in two quagmires.

STILL ANOTHER parallel concerns sheer military capability. In the early 1920's, when serious conflict threatened the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean, a demobilized England no longer possessed the armed strength necessary to wage war in more than one region at a time. That weakness would play a role in the country's vacillating response to Mussolini's challenge in 1923. Yet nothing was done to rectify this deficiency, which continued to paralyze the English until 1939. America faced a similar challenge in 1994, when consecutive crises erupted in Korea and Iraq, both of which threatened to require large-scale military commitments and thus to test the stated American policy of being ready to fight two "major theater conflicts nearly simultaneously."

The first crisis centered on North Korea's continued noncompliance with the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In mid-1994, driven reluctantly by evidence that the North Koreans were pursuing the development of nuclear weapons, the U.S. set about laying the basis for international sanctions. But when the North Korean regime declared that it would regard the imposition of sanctions as an act of war, and would proceed to attack South Korea, suddenly the crisis changed course, and a deal was hastily put together. In exchange for an agreement to stop working on a nuclear program it had never admitted to, North Korea would receive international assistance in developing peaceful nuclear power, plus hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil. As for the inspections that the International Atomic Energy Agency deemed essential, these the North Koreans proceeded to disallow.

The Clinton administration declared victory, but even at the time it was laughably clear that all we had accomplished was to bribe the North Koreans to back away from their threat. And we had done so, it seems, for a simple reason. Among the options that had to be considered by American planners was the possibility, no matter how deeply undesirable, of actual war. But armed conflict in

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Korea would call for the deployment of about 400,000 U.S. servicemen, and at the time there were only some 525,000 soldiers in the American army. Thus, a commitment of the forces necessary to ensure rapid victory would have stripped us of the ability to respond elsewhere—a crippling prospect even in theory.

As it happens, "elsewhere" in 1994 might have been Iraq. For, only a few months later, Saddam Hussein was to mobilize three divisions of his Republican Guard and move them toward the Kuwaiti border. In this case, the U.S. reply was quick and powerful: within days, tens of thousands of U.S. troops were on their way to Kuwait, and as many as 200,000 were placed on alert for possible deployment. Saddam backed down. But what this sequence of events demonstrated with stark vividness was that we would not have been able to deal with both North Korea and Iraq at the same time: an army of 525,000 could not have dispatched 400,000 soldiers to the one place and 200,000 to the other, or even anything approaching such numbers. The U.S. policy of maintaining forces capable of fighting two major regional conflicts nearly simultaneously had been exposed as a myth.

IV

As in England in the 1920's, all these crises passed; agreements were reached; peace prevails. Today, the inadequacy of American armed forces seems unimportant. Saddam is quiescent, and there even appears to be good news from Korea. Bosnia and Kosovo, under the watchful eyes of peacekeepers, are relatively tranquil. The sky seems blue—as blue as it did for England.

But there are as many potential causes of conflict today as there were then. Indeed, both China and Russia already pose threats considerably more dangerous than those posed by Japan and Germany in the late 1920's, and potential regional adversaries like Iraq and North Korea are far more menacing than any regional aggressor faced by the British. True, as in the roaring 20's, many of these dangers have been submerged beneath the swelling tide of international prosperity. It is possible to buy off the North Koreas or the Chinas of this world—because we have the money, and because they are satisfied, for now, to take it. But how long either condition will last is anybody's guess. Will we, like England, one day find ourselves facing both an urgent need to rearm and insuperable political and economic pressure not to?

No state benefited more from a peaceful and stable world than did England in its day, or than does America today, and none would be more immediately harmed by a return to global chaos and conflict. No other state, then or now, has possessed both the global interests and the means, in principle, with which to protect them. On no other state has it been more obviously incumbent to keep the peace.

The English did rather badly at this task in the 1920's, and in the 1990's we followed suit. Both nations, having cut their armed forces dramatically, dreamed of pursuing isolationist foreign policies even as they were dragged unwillingly into continued involvement in the world. Both allowed the friendships and alliances on which they relied for their security to decay. Both permitted aggressors to undermine the international order and the organizations designed to preserve it. Above all, both refused to accept the responsibilities of global leadership that their power and their position in the world had thrust upon them.

When the next war came, the British were unprepared; only the intervention of the United States saved them from perdition. Historical analogies are never perfect, but the similarities between British policy in the interwar years and American policy since the end of the cold war should serve as a warning of the much worse fate that may lie in store for us if we continue to act as if only tranquility lay ahead. For there is no America waiting in the wings today to save us if we err.

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Yes and No to Gun Control

Gary Rosen

GUN CONTROL is hardly a new issue in American politics, but its current prominence—with the presidential candidates staking out positions on such esoteric matters as trigger locks and the "gun-show loophole"—would seem to require some explaining. After all, the U.S. continues to enjoy an unprecedented downturn in the crime rate. For eight consecutive years and across every major category of crime, the country has grown considerably safer, with the most impressive gains coming in urban areas. In New York City, to take just one much-celebrated example, the incidence of rape has dropped by 35 percent, aggravated assault by 37 percent, and robbery by 62 percent; having suffered some 2,200 murders as recently as 1990, the city recorded fewer than 700 in each of the last two years.

What such statistics fail to register, of course, is the shock and outrage caused throughout the country by one small subset of violent crimes: the mass shootings that have recently occurred with bloody regularity in corners of American life usually spared such things. Last year alone, there were highly publicized attacks at a brokerage firm in Atlanta, a Jewish community center in Los Angeles, and a church in Fort Worth. Still more disturbing have been the more than a half-dozen episodes since 1997 in which students have opened fire at their own schools, the deadliest of these assaults being the one at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, where two teenage gunmen killed twelve of their classmates and a teacher before taking their own lives. As the number of these shootings has mounted, so, too, has public concern. How have such young, or deranged, or racist malefactors been able to acquire the lethal instruments of their rage?

For the proponents of gun control, the answer is simple: the country is awash in firearms, and, thanks to the obstructionism of the National Rifle Association (NRA) and its political allies, we have not done nearly enough to keep weapons out of the hands of the most dangerous members of society. Moreover, they add, for all the recent progress in fighting crime, the U.S. remains the most violent of Western societies, with a death toll from gun-related incidents vastly exceeding that of nations with more stringent regulations and fewer firearms. What the country thus desperately needs, it is said—in the joint rallying cry of this past spring's "Million Mom March," of advocacy groups like Handgun Control, Inc. (HCI), and of a swelling chorus of sympathetic politicians and editorialists—is a full range of "sensible" or "commonsense" gun laws.

OWNERSHIP OF guns is extraordinarily widespread in the United States, and has been for some time. Indeed, since the late 1950's, when surveys on this question were first done, the share of American households reporting at least one fire-

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arm has remained fairly constant at just under 50 percent. Needless to say, this does not mean that there is a gun-owner behind every second door in any American community. Guns are much more common in the Rocky Mountain states, South, and Midwest; in every region of the country, they are most likely to belong to middle-class, middle-aged men who live in rural areas or small towns. A useful shorthand for all this demography is that the average American gun-owner, both today and in the past, has tended to be a hunter or target-shooter.

What has changed dramatically over the last several decades is the size and composition of the American gun stock. The total number of firearms in circulation across the country has expanded at an astonishing rate, from about 75 million in the late 1960's to some 230 million today. At the same time, and despite the continuing predominance of the "long" guns (that is, rifles and shotguns) favored by sportsmen, an ever-increasing share of these firearms has consisted of handguns, whose primary use, as the supporters of stricter controls like to say, is against people. Such weapons have proliferated both among criminals, who use them in more than four out of five gun-related crimes, and among law-abiding citizens, especially urbanites, concerned about self-protection. As a result of these trends, Americans are now thought to possess somewhere in the neighborhood of 80 million handguns.

This shift in the character of ownership has taken place against a complicated legal backdrop, the basic feature of which at the federal level is the Gun Control Act of 1968. Passed in the aftermath of a spate of inner-city riots and the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy, the act was something of a catch-all, its provisions ranging from restrictions on machine guns to new federal penalties for the criminal use of a firearm. Its central aim, however, was to establish, for the first time, certain national standards concerning how guns are sold, and to whom. Dealers were required to obtain a federal license, to keep records of their sales (including the serial numbers newly mandated for all guns), to limit their interstate business, and to put an end to mail-order deliveries. More importantly, they were obliged to refuse guns to minors and to several categories of people now prohibited by federal law from possessing them, including convicted felons, fugitives from justice, drug abusers, and anyone with a history of serious mental illness.

The chief addition to this original set of federal controls has been the Brady Act, which went into effect in 1994. Named for James Brady, the White House press secretary gravely wounded in the attempt on President Reagan's life in 1981, the law requires licensed dealers to run a background check on prospective buyers, who previously had only to sign a form declaring that they did not fall into any of the prohibited groups. To make such investigations more practical—and less onerous for purchasers—the legislation also created a computerized "national instant check system" for criminal records. Under the supervision of the FBI, this system has been in operation since 1998.*

Far outnumbering federal regulations are the various local and state laws that have long been the principal source of firearms control in the U.S. As one might expect, these vary widely, according to the political tendencies and "gun culture" of different parts of the country. Even before passage of the Brady Act, about half the states, but especially more urbanized ones with higher crime rates, were already conducting background checks on purchasers, usually as part of a state-run system of licensing or registration. A few states also ban an assortment of semiautomatic "assault" weapons (thus supplementing a less comprehensive federal ban), and others have passed "child-access-prevention" laws, making it a crime to leave a gun within easy reach of a juvenile.

But where the states diverge most among themselves is in their treatment of handguns. Several have set a limit of just one purchase a month or have outlawed the cheap, smaller guns popularly known as "Saturday-night specials," and a substantial minority impose a waiting period of their own, typically seven days or less, before a sale may be completed. A number of localities, including New York City, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., have gone still farther, passing ordinances that are so restrictive as to make the legal acquisition of a handgun virtually impossible. In most of the country, however, such firearms are essentially available on demand to any federally qualified buyer. In addition, more than 30 states, from Oregon to Florida to Maine, allow anyone who meets certain basic requirements to receive a *concealed*-handgun permit, entitling its holder to keep a weapon at the ready in a holster, pocket, or purse; the legislation giving Texans this right was signed into law in 1995 by Governor George W. Bush.

To the critics of this patchwork regime of local, state, and federal laws, its gross inadequacy is best seen in the high number of lives regularly lost

* In the four years before the "instant" system was available, the Brady Act provided a waiting period of up to five days for the completion of a background check and applied exclusively to handguns; it now covers all firearms bought from a licensed dealer.

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to firearms in the U.S. Thanks to the "nation's porous gun laws," the *New York Times* declared in a recent editorial, "more than 80 Americans, including about a dozen children, continue to die every day from gun violence." For Handgun Control, Inc., the largest and most influential of the gun-control lobbies, the cumulative figures from this carnage suggest a damning analogy. "In 1997, 32,436 Americans were killed with firearms," the group notes. "In comparison, 33,651 Americans were killed in the Korean war, and 58,148 Americans were killed in the Vietnam war."

What is perhaps surprising about these gun fatalities is how few of them, relatively speaking, are the result of homicide. As HCI and its sister organizations emphasize, firearms pose a threat to "public health" that extends well beyond their role in the commission of violent crimes. Of the deaths in HCI's alarming tally, almost 13,000 were murders—but some 17,500 were suicides and nearly 1,000 were accidents. "The nexus is inescapable," according to an analyst for the Violence Policy Center. "The more accessibility to guns you have, the higher the rates of gun-related death and injury."

The senselessness of this human destruction is compounded, in the eyes of gun-control advocates, by the fundamental delusion that persuades so many Americans to own firearms in the first place. "It is important to remember that the belief that handguns are useful for self-defense is misguided," warns the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, reporting an oft-cited study's conclusion that "a firearm in the home is 43 times more likely to be used for suicide or murder than self-defense." Worse, because so many guns kept in the home are stored recklessly or lack safety features, children have frequently been their special victims, inadvertently doing grievous harm to themselves and others. As HCI starkly puts it, presumably with a view to the suburbanites who are among its prime supporters, American parents have too often dropped off a child "at a friend's house for an afternoon play session or a sleep-over party not knowing that the car ride would be the last time they would see their child alive."

For the proponents of gun control, any solution to America's gun problem must be, like the problem itself, national in scope. Left to their own devices—and to the grassroots machinations of the NRA—too many states, they argue, have failed to pass adequate regulations, thereby endangering not just their own citizens but those of other states as well.

One broad set of remedies proposed in recent years—and pursued both on Capitol Hill and through lawsuits against the firearms industry—has focused on design and manufacture. Under these supply-side measures, gun-makers would be required, among other things, to stop producing "Saturday-night specials" and to add various safety features to their other handguns, from trigger locks meant for the protection of children to "smart" technology that, when fully developed, would allow a weapon to be fired only by an authorized user.

As for the demand side of the equation, gun-control groups have called for new laws that would place further barriers in the path of criminals and other people prohibited from buying firearms. At the top of this list, particularly after investigators discovered where the weapons used in the Columbine massacre were obtained, has been closing the "gun-show loophole." As matters now stand at such events (more than 4,000 of which are held each year), private collectors and hobbyists—unlike the licensed gun dealers who set up their wares alongside them—do not have to run background checks on potential buyers, and as a result, critics contend, they have become a key source for criminals and the illegal gun trade.

Much more ambitious, if less of-the-moment politically, is the idea of a national system of registration and licensing. The most fully articulated plan of this sort, a bill introduced in the Senate to coincide with the Million Mom March, would require anyone selling a handgun or semiautomatic firearm, whether a dealer or a private citizen, to provide the government with a record of sale, including a serial number. In addition, anyone wishing to buy such guns—or anyone owning older versions of them—would have to obtain a federal firearms license, a process that would include an extensive background check, a written safety test, and a thumbprint. Such a system, a spokesman for HCI told the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, "would make sure that the wrong people don't get a hold of guns; make sure that people know how to use guns properly; [and] make it easier for police to trace crime guns and detect gun traffickers."

THAT THOSE urging the adoption of these laws would present them as simple expressions of "common sense" is understandable. There is no denying the large number of Americans killed by gunfire each year. More to the point, there seems to be something obvious, even self-evident, in the idea that the general availability of guns goes a long way toward explaining the country's high rates of violence, or that placing further limits on manufacturers, dealers, and owners would help to save lives.

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Commonplace as these intuitions may be, however, and central though they are to the abiding popular appeal of gun control, they deserve scrutiny—at least if the ultimate objective is indeed a truly "sensible" set of policies. A useful place to begin is with the "firearm facts" routinely deployed by the advocates of gun control. These, as it happens, are frequently either incomplete or misleading, and especially so with respect to children, whose vulnerability to random gun violence has been grossly exaggerated in order to score political points.

Of the "dozen children" killed by guns each day, for example, about ten are older adolescents, aged fifteen to nineteen, and most of them perish as a result of involvement in drug or gang activity.* Preteen children, by contrast, are rarely the victims of fatal gun accidents, the overall incidence of which has been dropping steadily for decades. Although trigger locks and "child-access-prevention" laws may avert a few of these domestic tragedies (and are arguably worthwhile for that reason), as accident risks go, particularly among the children solicitously delivered to "afternoon play sessions" and "sleep-over parties," backyard swimming pools should be a much greater cause for concern: despite being present in far fewer households than are guns, they take many times the number of young lives.

As for suicide, there is no reason to think that its likelihood is higher because of the widespread availability of firearms. To the contrary, despite a three-fold increase in the number of guns in the U.S. over the last three decades, the total suicide rate has remained fairly constant. *Gun* suicides have occurred slightly more often—they now account for over half the firearm deaths in the country—but when guns are less readily to hand, people who are determined to kill themselves just resort to other equally lethal means.

Much the same logic applies to the acts of criminal violence that are most troubling to the public and to policy-makers. As recent history demonstrates—with gun ownership on a steep rise while rates of murder, robbery, and assault have dropped precipitously—the total volume of violent crime in the U.S. is unconnected to the prevalence of guns in American society at large. Guns certainly make such violence as we have more deadly, but they in no sense *generate* that violence, and still less do they explain the dispiriting fact that we murder one another much more often than do Europeans or the Japanese. Alas, we do so in every category of homicide, whether the instrument is a gun, a knife, or a fist. Instructive too in this regard is a comparison to countries like Switzerland, Norway, and Israel, where household gun ownership is very common but violent crime is not.

CONSIDERABLE MODESTY is also in order when it comes to the utility of gun laws for preventing further mass shootings. "No more Columbines" may be a rousing slogan, but the perpetrators of the Columbine massacre—like their counterparts in a number of similar incidents—would not have been stopped by the new regulations that have been proposed. Although it is true that the guns used in the Colorado attack were bought from private collectors at gun shows and that neither of the "straw" purchasers who obtained them for the killers underwent a background check, had they been required to do so, both would have been approved, their records having been completely clean.

Or consider the case of Larry Gene Ashbrook, the forty-seven-year-old loner who killed seven people, including four teenagers, at a Fort Worth church last September. Though irascible and mentally unbalanced according to neighbors and police, he had never committed a felony or undergone psychiatric treatment, and was in no way barred by law from buying the pistol used in his murderous rampage. If a federal license had been necessary for this purchase, he would have had no trouble qualifying for one. As *Newsweek* commented at the time—and as one can say of mass shootings in general, considering how utterly atypical they are among gun murders—"the hard lesson of Ashbrook's spree was that there are some dangers against which society might just not have a clear defense."

Finally, there is the issue of self-protection, perhaps the most important in the entire gun-control debate and the one concerning which proponents of gun control tend to be at their most disingenuous. As Iain Murray of the nonprofit Statistical Assessment Service observes, the endlessly repeated claim—or some variation of it—that "a firearm in the home is 43 times more likely to be used for suicide or murder than self-defense" has been "discredited completely," for it depends "on the very rare instance of someone actually shooting dead, as opposed to scaring off or wounding, an intruder." When the defensive use of firearms is defined more reasonably to include, in particular, its most common form, which is the simple display of a gun, the picture that emerges is radically different.

* Even the figure of a "dozen," based on data from 1997, is no longer accurate; statistics released in July by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention put the daily toll of "children" at ten for 1998, continuing the downward trend of recent years.

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The most comprehensive research on this issue, conducted by the criminologist Gary Kleck of Florida State University, suggests that Americans use guns to ward off a criminal aggressor as many as 2.5 million times a year—a figure roughly three times higher, Kleck points out, than the number of gun-related crimes committed each year. Far from being foolhardy or dangerous, as skeptics contend, such resistance makes it less likely that would-be victims will lose their property in a robbery or be injured in an assault. Surveys of imprisoned felons confirm that the possibility of confronting an armed victim is among their biggest worries.

A narrower, if more provocative, case for the deterrent effect of private gun ownership has been made by John R. Lott, Jr., a research scholar at Yale Law School. In his much-discussed 1998 book, *More Guns, Less Crime*,* Lott analyzed the state laws allowing most citizens to qualify for a concealed-handgun permit—a privilege that gun-control advocates have derided, and fought, as a sure recipe for Wild-West-style shootouts. Not only, he found, have such "right-to-carry" laws failed to spark irresponsible gun use, but they have driven down rates of violence, with the most dramatic progress often occurring in those urban jurisdictions, like Pittsburgh and Atlanta, that saw the largest increase in the number of permits issued. Lott's conclusion: the carrying of concealed handguns is "the most cost-effective means of reducing crime."

DOES ALL this mean that the opponents of gun control and in particular the NRA are right? To some extent, it does. Despite their often incendiary rhetoric—"From my cold, dead hands!" intoned NRA president Charlton Heston, hoisting a musket over his head at the group's annual convention in May—they do keep the national debate honest. This is not because they are necessarily honest themselves, but because the view they espouse is so intransigently at odds with the anti-gun prejudices of the country's educated elite and major media organs. With close to 4 million members, the NRA is a standing reminder that, however distasteful firearms may be considered in Manhattan or Georgetown or Beverly Hills, a great many ordinary Americans own and value them for a range of perfectly valid reasons.

It is therefore all the more unfortunate that these legitimate interests have been translated, as a practical matter, into a virtually absolutist rejection of any proposal for the regulation of firearms. The usual starting point for the NRA is the Second Amendment, which declares, in its much-fought-over 27 words, "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed." For advocates of gun control, the amendment's introductory phrases about the militia render it little more than an 18th-century curiosity, a constitutional anachronism best left to historians of the early republic. For the NRA and its sympathizers, it is the main clause that counts, describing in unequivocal language an individual right no less fundamental than those enshrined in the First Amendment.

But even if this latter view is basically correct—and I believe that it is—it is a far cry from a general prohibition on laws regulating the sale and ownership of firearms. Short of banning most guns or denying them to certain individuals without cause—measures that would strike at the core right "to keep and bear arms"—the government would seem to have a substantial degree of latitude under the Second Amendment. As the legal scholar Nelson Lund recently wrote in the *Weekly Standard*, urging the courts to take this part of the Bill of Rights more seriously, "most existing federal regulations . . . would probably survive such scrutiny because they are sufficiently well tailored to achieve sufficiently important government purposes."

As for the many specific measures that the gun lobby has invariably resisted over the years, some have been worth combating and others have not. There is, for instance, every reason to oppose efforts (like that of Vice President Gore) to ban "Saturday-night specials." Though criminals show no special preference for these small, inexpensive guns, they are often the only ones that the law-abiding poor can afford for self-defense. It is worth noting in this connection that the idea of singling out such weapons originated in the Jim Crow South as a means of disarming blacks; the name for them comes from the racist epithet, "nigger-town Saturday night." Similarly, the imposition of costly "smart-gun" technology on firearms manufacturers would have the effect—if it should ever get off the drawing board—of pricing many low-income people out of the market.

What of restrictions on machine guns and "assault" weapons, plastic guns and armor-piercing bullets? It is here that the supporters of gun rights have displayed an astonishing and self-destructive obtuseness, even as they have sometimes acceded to such measures under political duress. Their argument that these weapons and munitions are seldom used in crime (which is in fact the case) is quite be-

* It has recently been reissued in an updated paperback edition: University of Chicago Press, 321 pp., $12.00.

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side the point. Such menacing firearms are widely, and rightly, viewed as falling outside any reasonable recreational or protective need—as HCI asks, "Who needs an AK-47 to go duck-hunting?"—and the simple prospect of their availability is perceived as a threat to public safety. Even if the stakes involved are largely symbolic, symbols matter.

There are problems, too, with what is perhaps the most formidable argument of the gun lobby: that gun control is pointless because, in the words of one NRA brochure, "criminals do not bother with the niceties of obeying laws—for a criminal is, by definition, someone who disobeys laws." This is certainly true, but not in an unqualified sense. Gary Kleck, whose *Targeting Guns* (1997)* is an encyclopedic scholarly critique of the key assumptions of gun control, agrees that "many criminals will ignore gun laws and get guns anyway." But as he notes, this is hardly "decisive regarding the desirability of gun control, since it does not address the number of successes of gun control. . . . It is even conceivable that if just 1 or 2 percent of potentially violent persons could be denied a gun, the resulting benefits might exceed the costs of whatever measure produced this modest level of compliance." The question, then, is how this calculus plays out with a given policy.

FOR THE system of background checks that is now the centerpiece of federal gun-control law, the benefits are not difficult to see. In 1999, according to the Justice Department, more than 200,000 gun-sale applications were rejected because the buyer was disqualified in some way, overwhelmingly for a felony conviction or indictment. Since the Brady Act went into effect in 1994, such rejections have numbered well over a half-million. It is true that a small fraction of these, especially early on, resulted from bureaucratic foul-ups. Moreover, the fact that individuals with a criminal record were unable to get a gun from a licensed dealer tells us nothing about whether they were *ultimately* able to get a gun, a problem highlighted by a widely reported study of the Brady Act published last month in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Still, for the price of making everyone submit to a slight administrative inconvenience, hundreds of thousands of high-risk bad guys have been denied weapons at the moment they wanted them.

Should the requirement of running background checks apply to the hobbyists and collectors who set up shop at gun shows? Those opposed to the notion point with some justice to its arbitrariness, since it would not affect the private sale of firearms at any other venue: to skirt the new law, private sellers could just arrange to complete their transactions elsewhere. But such critics draw the wrong conclusion. What the "gun-show loophole" really illustrates is the need to extend the terms of the Brady Act to *every* private transfer of a firearm, whether at a gun show or not.

Gun-owners would squawk, but the requirement would not be especially burdensome. It would merely mean having to use a licensed dealer as a broker for private firearms transactions—of which there are some 3 million each year—in order to ensure a proper background check. The arrangement already prevails on the Internet, where sales of guns—as of everything else—have grown exponentially in recent years. Would many people evade this system? Certainly. But enough would make a good-faith effort at compliance to hinder the immediate acquisition of firearms by criminals, who are much more likely to get their guns in a private exchange—or from theft—than from a licensed dealer.

An even more promising way to keep firearms from falling into dangerous hands, it is said, would be a federal system for registering guns and licensing gun-owners. This idea is supported, according to opinion polls, by a sizable majority of Americans. The NRA, however, is vehemently opposed, seeing registration in particular as the first bureaucratic step toward the eventual banning of firearms, as indeed it was in the de-facto prohibition of handguns now in effect in Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

But the more serious objection to any national scheme of registration is of an opposite complexion: not that it would be too irresistibly efficient but that it would be almost completely irrelevant. As even the rather visionary proposal recently introduced in the Senate concedes in its details, no viable system of registration could apply retroactively—that is, to existing firearms; the expense and administrative complications would be too great, not to mention the political grief of persuading (or compelling) current gun-owners to cooperate. What this means is that, under the bill, registration would apply, at most, to the 5 or 6 million handguns and semiautomatic weapons that are sold new or privately transferred each year—leaving the rest of America's 230 million guns untouched. Such limited information may be worth having in order to discourage illicit sales, but even decades from now it would make a negligible difference in solving all but a tiny handful of gun crimes.

As for insisting that every gun-owner obtain a

* Aldine de Gruyter, 450 pp., $26.95 (paperback).

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federal license, there is again the question of efficacy. The research that has been done on licensing, as well as on waiting periods, suggests that whatever impact these measures have on reducing violent crime is owed to the background checks that they entail. If such checks are expanded, as they should be, to cover *all* gun transactions, licensing would merely duplicate the effort. A better use of time and money would be to improve the accuracy and accessibility of both the FBI's "national instant check system" and the similar screening operations run by many of the states.

"Common sense," in short, should indeed be our guide in devising gun laws, but its dictates are not as clear as the advocates of further regulations would have us believe. Banning whole categories of firearms amounts at most to a reassuring gesture (as with "assault" weapons) but can also interfere with the legitimate right of self-defense (as with "Saturday-night specials"). Safety measures like trigger locks may save a few lives on the margins, but allowing law-abiding citizens to carry handguns may do even more in this regard. And background checks are a helpful tool—but they are only that, not a solution for the "gun problem," whose dimensions, in any event, have little to do with our society's possessing so very many firearms.

IT HAS often been observed that, though generally well disposed to gun control, the American public doubts such laws will have much of an effect on stopping crime. Far from being contradictory, this view strikes a nice balance, reflecting as it does not only the reasonable belief that having *some* effect on stopping crime is no bad thing but also a realistic assessment of the result of most gun regulations.

Arrayed on either side of this sober consensus, however, are the true believers, the noisiest participants in what B. Bruce-Briggs, writing in the *Public Interest* in the mid-1970's, could even then call "the great American gun war." The NRA plays its part, defending a nearly unconditional right "to keep and bear arms." On the other side, HCI, the "Million Moms," and the *New York Times* play theirs, waving a bloody banner after each new outburst of gun violence and declaring "if only there had been a law." Neither side is right, but, at this particular juncture, it is the latter group, the devotees of gun control, that stands to do more harm.

This is not because the gun controllers will see their agenda fully realized, but rather because their extravagant rhetoric, magnified by the powerful forums available to them, has begun to shift the terms of a more fundamental debate, the one over *crime*, in an ominous direction, away from the strategies that have made the U.S. so demonstrably safer a place in recent years. For those who have never been happy with aggressive policing, or high incarceration rates, gun control has become a useful diversion, explicitly targeting a colorful array of "rednecks" and "gun nuts" but implicitly placing under moral suspicion anyone who owns or uses a firearm. To the degree that this hysteria over guns causes the rest of us, including public officials and the police, to lose sight of the real crime problem—and the criminals behind it—it is a dangerous and deeply worrisome development.

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Wandering Jews—and Their Genes

Hillel Halkin

It was not long ago that genetic research on Jews suggested little beyond an occasional rare disease, to be discussed on the science pages of the newspaper. Not any more. Recently, three studies on Jewish genetics have made it to the front page—and from there, with still more to come in the wake of the mapping of the human genome, they are undoubtedly headed for the pages of the Jewish history books of the future.

The first of these studies, released in 1997, deals with the class of Jews known in Hebrew as *kohanim* and in English as "priests"—a largely honorary title in postbiblical Judaism. A *kohen*, while supposedly a direct descendant via his male ancestors of the priestly clan originating in Moses and Aaron, and entrusted by the Bible with a large number of important rites, has had limited religious functions and obligations since the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 C.E.; moreover, since most *kohanim* today are not religiously observant, most no longer practice even these few functions. Still, possessing either a family tradition of *kohen*ite origins or one of many last names that derive from the word *kohen* (Cohen, Cahan, Kahn, Kogen, etc.), many still know or believe that they are priests.

Armed with lists of *kohanim* and techniques for analyzing variations in the DNA of the Y chromosome, which determines that a baby will be male and (random mutations excluded) has the unique feature of passing unchanged from father to son over an unlimited number of generations, a team of scientists from the University of Arizona, the Haifa Technion, and the center for genetic anthropology at University College, London, set about looking for a distinct priestly Y chromosome—and found it. Whereas only 3 to 5 percent of all male Jews have certain "*kohen*-specific" Y-chromosome haplotypes or DNA markers, these patterns, the team's research showed, are found in just under half of all self-declared Ashkenazi *kohanim* and just over half of all non-Ashkenazi ones. Moreover, since the difference between *kohanim* and non-*kohanim* points to a single common ancestor for the former, and the average rate at which this ancestor's Y chromosome would have mutated over time is known from statistical tables, it is possible to estimate how long ago he lived: namely, 106 generations. Allowing 25 to 30 years for a generation, this gives us a date between 650 and 1180 B.C.E. The earlier of these takes us back close to the time in which a historical Moses would have lived.

A second research project, making use of these findings and made public last year by a joint London-Oxford University team, examined a black, Bantu-speaking tribe in northern South Africa and Zimbabwe named the Lemba. Today largely Christian, the Lemba have an oral tradition of being de-

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scended from Jews and of having maintained since time immemorial such Jewish practices as circumcision, ritual slaughtering of animals for food, and abstention from pork. These claims were never taken seriously by scholars, one of whom, Tudor Parfitt, a London-based academic and writer, published a charmingly skeptical book on the subject in 1992. But hearing of the *kohanim* project, Parfitt returned to Africa to test the Lemba for Jewish priestly genes. The results were astounding. Nine percent of the Lemba sampled—two to three times that of known Jewish populations—had *kohen*ite Y chromosomes, while in one particular clan, held by Lemba lore to be that of the tribe's founder, the figure soared to 53 percent.

Finally, published in last June's *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* were the results of a study conducted by an international team of scientists led by Michael Hammer of the University of Arizona and Batsheva Bonné-Tamir of Tel Aviv University. Ignoring the *kohen* variation indicating specifically priestly descent, this study sorted instead for a more general "Jewish" profile of Y chromosomes. Based on genetic samples from 1,371 males chosen from seven Jewish population groups (Ashkenazi, Roman, North African, Kurdish, Near Eastern, Yemenite, and Ethiopian) and sixteen non-Jewish groups including the Lemba, its main conclusions are:

1. With the exception of Ethiopian Jews, all Jewish samples show a high genetic correlation. Male Jews of Russian and Polish ancestry have a Y-chromosome profile more like that of male Moroccan, Kurdish, and Iraqi Jews than like that of Russian and Polish non-Jews; male Jews of Yemenite ancestry are closer to Jews from Rome than to Muslims from Yemen.

2. Besides being closely related to each other, Jewish male populations correlate highly with Palestinian Arabs, Syrians, and Lebanese.

3. In descending order after these Middle Easterners, Ashkenazi Jews correlate best with Greeks and Turks; then with Italians; then with Spaniards; then with Germans; then with Austrians; and least of all with Russians. The Y chromosomes of non-Ashkenazi Jews correlate best with Egyptians and Tunisians.

4. When Lemba not having *kohen*ite genes are averaged in, the Lemba-Jewish correlation decreases sharply. Even then, however, the Y-chromosome haplotypes of Lemba men are more like Jewish ones than like those of any other sub-Saharan Africans.

Although related, each of these studies deals with a different population or set of them. Taken separately and together, what do they teach us about Jewish history?

II

THE FIRST thing that might be said is that they shore up, *and* they undermine, some traditional notions.

On the one hand, the existence of a *kohen*ite Y chromosome traceable to a single progenitor who lived near the supposed date of the Exodus supports, if not the Bible's account of the priesthood's origins, at least the antiquity of the institution and its hereditary nature. At a time when a radical "biblical minimalism" denying the historicity of the entire Pentateuch has been gaining ground among scholars, the *kohen*ite Y chromosome is thus a striking argument for a more conservative reading of biblical texts.

On the other hand, there are the Lemba. Out of the blue, as it were—for nowhere in any Jewish or non-Jewish source are they even hinted at—we find an ethnic group near the southern tip of Africa with a genetic tie to Jews elsewhere. Where did they come from? How did they get to be where they are? If they lived totally apart from other Jews for hundreds or thousands of years while retaining a distinct "Jewish" identity, can this have happened in other places, too? Did the Jewish people have another, "shadow" history, inhabited by groups that we know little or nothing about?

And once more on the side of tradition: the Hammer/Bonné-Tamir report would seem to corroborate the age-old Jewish belief that, allowing for a relatively small increment of proselytes throughout the ages, the Jewish people forms a biologically close-knit family originally hailing from the Fertile Crescent and Palestine. On the face of it, then, these findings refute various "revisionist" theories proposing that, not only in remote regions like Ethiopia and Yemen but even in such great Jewish population centers as Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean basin, much or possibly most of the Jewish community resulted from a massive conversion of non-Jews.

And on the other hand again: whereas the traditional explanation of East European Jewish origins was that most Ashkenazi Jews reached Poland and Russia from eastern and northeastern Germany in the Middle Ages; eastern Germany from the Rhineland; the Rhineland from northern France; and northern France from southern France, this version has come under increasing challenge in recent years on both demographic and linguistic grounds. Most Jews, the challengers maintain, must have arrived in Eastern Europe not from the west and southwest but from the south and east—that is, via northern Italy and the Balkans; Asia Minor and the Greek Byzantine empire; the Volga kingdom of the Khaz-

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ars (a Turkish-speaking people partially converted to Judaism in the 8th through 10th centuries); or a combination of all three. Now comes the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* report, which appears to bear out the newer version of events. Ashkenazi Jews, it informs us, have a more significant admixture of Italian, Greek, and Turkish genes than of Spanish, German, or even Austrian ones.

Of course, things are not so simple. Even without questioning the study's highly technical procedures, different interpretations could be put on them. It could be argued, for example, that the resemblance of Jewish to Greek and Italian Y chromosomes is traceable to proselytization in the Mediterranean world during the period of the Roman Empire, long before the main Jewish migration to Eastern Europe began. Or, alternately, this resemblance could go back to pre-Jewish history—that is, to an age in which, before a Jewish people existed, shared genes were being swapped by frequent migratory movements around and across the Mediterranean. Just as the strong similarity among Jewish, Palestinian Arab, Syrian, and Lebanese Y chromosomes does not necessarily indicate intermarriage or conversion in one direction or another, but simply a common eastern Mediterranean gene stock, so the somewhat weaker similarity among Jews, Italians, and Greeks might be explained the same way.

As for the Turks, an originally Central Asian people who reached the Mediterranean only 1,000 years ago, here the data need to be clarified. Were the Turkish Y chromosomes sampled similar to those of non-Mediterranean Turkish peoples living in Central Asia today, which would strengthen the case for a Khazar contribution to East European Jewry? Or were they more like those of present-day Greeks, the relatives of the inhabitants of Asia Minor prior to the Turkish conquest, whose descendants may still account for the bulk of Turkey's gene pool?

OTHER QUESTIONS may be asked, too. Take this conclusion of the report in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*:

> Our results indicated a relatively minor contribution of [originally non-Jewish] European Y chromosomes to the Ashkenazim. . . . If we assume 80 generations since the founding of the Ashkenazi population, then the rate of admixture would be <0.5 percent [less than half of one percent] per generation.

Seemingly, this would indicate an extremely low *average* rate of accretion through proselytes.[1] Would it be enough, though, to answer the common objection that, since Ashkenazim tend to look so different from non-Ashkenazim, the two cannot be closely related genetically? It would appear to be, for what the objectors overlook is that even a small genetic input, when continued over many generations, can have a large cumulative effect.

Thus, if a tribe of 1,000 people absorbs five new members via exogamous marriage, the increment is indeed but one-half of one percent of its overall numbers. But the percentage could be considerably higher among the tribe's child-bearers, since many tribesmen would be already past child-bearing age and some potential parents might die before marriage or marry out; and if this same rate continues for 80 generations, or forms the average over such a period, "foreign" genes may come to constitute close to half the tribe's gene pool and be found in nearly everyone. This would certainly be adequate to explain such apparently puzzling features in many Ashkenazim as blond hair and blue eyes, infrequently encountered among other Jews.

What must also be remembered is that Y chromosomes tell us only about males. But we know that in most societies, women are more likely to convert to their husband's religion than vice-versa. Moreover, since polygamy was occasionally practiced among Ashkenazim until a thousand years ago, and among other Jews well into this century, it is logical to assume that many more females than males would have joined the Jewish people over time. The one-half-of-one-percent male accretion rate may thus be far lower than the combined male-female average.

If true, this might also explain a number of differences between the Hammer/Bonné-Tamir study and earlier research on the geographical distribution of specific Jewish diseases, blood types, enzymes, and mitochondrial DNA.[2] Although these studies, too, indicated a degree of genetic connectedness among

[1] It stands to reason that in some places and ages in Ashkenazi history, the rate of proselytization was higher and in others lower. The fact that Jewish-Slavic Y-chromosome correlation is low despite the long sojourn of Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe would indicate that converts to Judaism in the region were very rare—and, conversely, it may be that during the shorter period of the Roman empire, or of the Jewish kingdom of Khazaria, proselytization was more common.

[2] Mitochondria are organelles within the cell cytoplasm that produce metabolic enzymes and are, for research purposes, the female equivalent of the Y chromosome. Unlike other DNA, which is inherited from both parents and has the capacity to "recombine" in different ways in each offspring, mitochondrial DNA is inherited by both sexes from the mother alone and—random mutations again excluded—never changes in its transmission from one generation to the next.

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most of the world's Jews, their statistical correlations were lower than those of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* report, especially as between Ashkenazim and non-Ashkenazim.

In both groups, a predominance of female converts might provide the answer. It might also explain opposed findings on Jews from Yemen, who in earlier tests matched poorly with other Jews. This particular result was understood to support the theory that Yemenite Jewry originated in the widespread conversion of non-Jews under the Himyarite kings of southern Arabia in the first centuries of the Common Era. But now the Hammer/Bonné-Tamir report shows that the Y chromosomes of Yemenite Jews have typically Jewish haplotypes. The contradiction could be resolved by positing that Jewish men, in all likelihood traveling merchants, reached Yemen from further north in the Arabian Peninsula, where Jewish tribes existed; married local women; and founded a Jewish community that survived, despite its isolation, in more or less sustained contact with the Jewish world.

Minus such contact, the story of the Lemba—whose Jewish ancestors, Tudor Parfitt now hypothesizes, possibly a single family of *kohanim*, sailed down the Red Sea from Yemen to an East African port and moved inland to their present abode—might be similar. One thing that seems certain is that they have no connection with Ethiopian Jews, currently believed by most scholars to descend from Judaizing Christians in the Middle Ages. For the moment, the Lemba remain an enigma, although one not without parallels in the greater enigma we call the history of the Jews.

III

THIS HISTORY has known both Judaizing movements and tales of "lost" Jews. The former lie in the realm of fact, the latter are generally considered pure legend.

Judaizers are groups of non-Jews who have adopted Jewish practices and beliefs, sometimes without significant contact with other Jews. At times this has resulted in conversion or an ultimate affiliation with world Jewry, as happened in the last century (if such indeed is their background) with the Falashas of Ethiopia. Other Judaizers have stopped short of such steps or never contemplated them. The Russian Molokans, for example, a once-sizable sect that still survives in small numbers, observed circumcision and the Jewish Sabbath, refrained from pork and other prohibited foods, and denied the divinity of Jesus, but never sought to merge with Russian Jews.

Such movements have had varied and interrelated causes. They have been motivated by, among other things, a simple conviction of the truth of Judaism; by the same drive for religious differentiation that has led to a proliferation of sects and denominations in many societies; by a search on the part of central authorities for a sophisticated monotheistic faith; by the attractiveness of an association with a people deemed wealthier, more worldly, more caring of its own, and less threatening than others. The pagan kings of Khazaria who opted for Judaism in the 8th century were—or so at least the literary sources tell us—genuinely persuaded of its verities. But there is no doubt, too, that they wished to introduce into their kingdom an intellectually advanced religious tradition different from Christianity and Islam, the faiths of their enemies; and the fact that Jews had worldwide commercial links, a high degree of international solidarity, and no political or military designs on anyone must have been a consideration as well.

Although the world may have run out of pagan kingdoms looking for a suitable brand of monotheism, the motives of Judaizers have not changed much over time—at least not if judged by a new book by James B. Ross, *Fragile Branches: Travels Through the Jewish Diaspora*.[3] A professor of journalism and the author of a previous work on the Jews of China, Ross has here written an account of his travels to a number of exotic places in which small communities are trying to live as—or what they think of as—Jews. These include the Abayudaya of Uganda;[4] the "Bnei Avraham" of the Peruvian city of Trujillo; the "Bnei Menashe" of northeast India; the *mestizo* descendants of Jewish merchants in the Brazilian Amazon, whose upriver counterparts in Peru are the subject of another recent book, Ariel Segal's *Jews of the Amazon*;[5] and the "Bnei Anusim," a congregation of Judaizers allegedly descended from Marranos in the Brazilian coastal city of Recife.

None of these communities is officially recognized by the Jewish world, though some have forged ties with Jewish individuals and organizations. Two of them, the Bnei Avraham and the Bnei Menashe, have managed in part to emigrate to Israel, where they have undergone or are undergoing Orthodox conversion and naturalization

Numerically insignificant (the largest and best

[3] Riverhead Books, 240 pp., $23.95.

[4] See also "Among the Abayudaya" by Irwin M. Berg in COMMENTARY, January 1997.

[5] Jewish Publication Society, 340 pp., $29.95.

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organized of them, the Bnei Menashe, numbers some 4,000 members), these groups are interesting because of what they have in common. All are purely indigenous developments. All have grown up among people raised in Christianity. Most owe their origin to one or more charismatic leaders who discovered Judaism from reading the Bible and comparing the New Testament with the Hebrew Scriptures, the latter of which seemed to them to offer a purer and more rational faith than Christianity. All give their followers, most of them economically of the lower or lower-middle class, a welcome feeling of being special. And all inspire the hope of attracting the attention of world Jewry and benefiting from its resources.

All are characterized by an impressive tenacity, too. Even the two Amazonian groups, which by their own admission were recently formed—they consist of the grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren of Jewish traders who flocked to the area during the early-20th-century rubber boom, took Indian mistresses, fathered illegitimate offspring, and left when the boom collapsed—have by now kept a "Jewish" identity alive for three and four generations with minimal outside Jewish help in a strongly Catholic society.

Letting one's mind roam, one could imagine such groups preserving this uniqueness indefinitely, whether apart from the Jewish world like the Lemba or reincorporated into it like the Yemenites, their Y chromosomes correlating highly with those of other Jews and their mitochondrial DNA not at all. Perhaps, given enough generations, these *mestizo* descendants of Jewish merchants might even forget who their ancestors were; look for the answer in the Bible; and decide that they hailed from one of the "Ten Lost Tribes," exiled, according to the biblical book of Kings, from northern Israel by the Assyrians in the 8th century B.C.E. and never heard from again. Figuring out how such a tribe could have reached South America need not be a problem: it was already done by numerous 16th- to 18th-century authors, among them the renowned rabbi Menasseh ben Israel in his influential *Spes Israelis* published in 1650.

Indeed, "lost tribe" identifications in improbable places continue to this day. As recently as 1975, lineage from the tribe of Dan was officially granted to the Falashas of Ethiopia by an Israeli rabbinical court, and Israelite ancestry is currently being claimed by groups from New Zealand to Nigeria. One of the largest of these, from which come the Bnei Menashe, is a heavily Christianized people of approximately two million living along the Indian-Burmese border and most commonly known as the Mizo.

With these people, I happen to have some personal acquaintance.

IV

"AN ENCHANTING tale," Ross calls the belief of many Mizo that they descend from the biblical tribe of Menashe, "first suggested by 19th-century Christian missionaries eager to connect Mizo tribal rituals to passages in the Bible and to attract converts." Although Ross's dates are too early (the first English missionaries did not set foot in Mizo territory until 1897), the theory seems plausible and has been subscribed to by the handful of Western scholars who have given the matter any thought. But they are almost certainly wrong.

My own first visit to the hill country of northeast India took place in the summer of 1998, when I accompanied Eliahu Avichayil, a Jerusalem rabbi mentioned frequently in Ross's book, on a journalistic assignment to Asia. Avichayil has made a career of looking for stray Jews, especially remnants of the Ten Lost Tribes, believed by him—contrary to accepted scholarly opinion—to have had a genuine historical existence. I traveled with him to an ethnic minority called the Chiang in southwest China; to the Karens of northwest Thailand; and to Aizawl, the capital of the Indian state of Mizoram, which means "land of the Mizo" in the Tibeto-Burmese language of the area. (Other dialects of it are spoken in the adjacent state of Manipur and in Burma by groups known respectively as Kukis and Chin.) It was Avichayil's theory that the Chiang, Karen, and Kuki-Chin-Mizo were all related and descended from ancient Israel, and while I found this an unlikely notion, I gladly went along for the adventure.

Unlikely, China and Thailand indeed proved to be. Where Avichayil saw lost Jews everywhere, I saw only wishful thinking. But Aizawl, to which the rabbi had been before as the spiritual patron of the Bnei Menashe, was another story. In contrast to the Chiang and the Karen, who had no idea that they were supposed to be a lost tribe or any noticeable interest in being one, the Mizo I met were acutely conscious of the proposition and enthusiastically in agreement with it. Not only that: many of them, whether believing Christians or Judaizers, were eager to supply supporting "evidence"—alleged customs from the pre-Christian Mizo religion that were curiously like those in the Bible; old oral texts with biblical parallels; chants and prayers invoking

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an ancestor named Manmasi who was none other than Joseph's son Menashe; and so on. It did not take long to realize that I was dealing with a national obsession.

A good deal of it was clearly pure fantasy. One morning I was called upon by an eager young man who wanted to show me "a great miracle"—no, he would not tell me what it was, I had to see for myself. So off we went to one of Aizawl's lower neighborhoods (most of the town, a ramshackle affair stacked on hilltops, resembles a huge bungalow colony in which the only directions are up and down), where I was ushered into a house of expectant faces and shown a large goblet that was—*here, you can hold it yourself*—the silver divining cup used by Joseph in Egypt. I did not have the heart to point out the barely legible London silversmith's stamp on the bottom.

But it was not all like that. There were things that were puzzling, even baffling: an ancient song, for example (well, everyone *swore* it was ancient), that seemed to be about the crossing of the Red Sea; or childhood memories of grandfathers and great-grandfathers sacrificing on four-cornered altars to a supreme God named Ya. Not that this had to go back 3,000 years. Imagination, coincidence, or Christianity could no doubt account for every bit of it. Still, if an entire society was reinventing itself for reasons I did not understand, it seemed worth making the effort to do so. Last year, having negotiated a book contract with an American publisher, I returned on an expedition to Mizoram and Manipur at the end of the monsoons, taking with me two Bnei Menashe interpreters from Israel.

FOR SEVERAL weeks I thought I understood brilliantly. There were reasons, it turned out, for the Mizo to *like* being a lost tribe, a belief that had begun to circulate among them in the early 1950's after being revealed in visions to two members of a Pentecostal church. A proudly independent people of hunters and warriors led by fighting chiefs, the Mizo, though located within the borders of British India, had long been left alone by the British government, their jungle territory too remote and economically worthless to justify military pacification. It was not until the 1870's that the British army had moved to subdue them, followed by the first Baptist and Presbyterian missionaries.

Yet once Christianity took root among them, it grew by leaps and bounds. In 1905 there had been scarcely a Christian Mizo; by 1920 there were many; by 1960 the old animist religion was dead. Their new faith suited the Mizo well. It freed them from the old one's host of malevolent spirits and gave them education and a prestigious association with a ruling class while reinforcing their sense of superiority to the Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist neighbors formerly raided by them for slaves and plunder.

And yet the Mizo had a problem. Christianity had brought them great benefits. They were devoted to it. (They still are: for sheer around-the-clock, hymn-singing fervor, a Mizoram Sunday is hard to beat.) But it had also destroyed something vital, leaving them stripped of their identity. Once fearless headhunters and stalkers and slayers of animals in the jungle and upon the altar, they now had the second highest literacy rate in all India, farmed their rice patches on hillsides denuded of wildlife, tended shops with names like "Zion Hardware" and "Jerusalem Bazaar," and listened to Presbyterian sermons. Based on the New Testament, of course. The Hebrew Bible went untranslated by the missionaries, perhaps out of an appreciation of its dangers.

But when it finally *was* translated, the Mizo loved it. Here were no namby-pamby apostles but real men and women who fought, killed, lusted, took prisoners and slaves, and worshiped God with animal blood. And who were God's chosen! Suppose—just suppose—that Manmasi was Menashe and they the lost tribe of his descendants: then this, the world of Genesis, Leviticus, Joshua, Judges, and Kings, had all been theirs and the Christianity that brought them the Bible had destroyed nothing. On the contrary, it had restored them to their truest selves! No wonder the conviction was now spreading like wildfire. It was touching—and comical: at a convention I attended in Aizawl, a large hall full of delegates cheered and waved "Israel People" flags as it voted to demand international recognition as an official lost tribe.

Climbing the town's grimy stairways, or sloshing through the mud of country roads in four-wheel vehicles in search of this or that person fabled for longevity or knowledge of a way of life wiped out by the missionaries, I found the whole thing clear. It was obviously—no, not a hoax, no one was guilty of deliberate deception, but a case of mass autosuggestion.

A commonsense conclusion. And then (for reasons to be detailed in my forthcoming book) it fell apart. I came to know too much. The more oral texts and memories I gathered, the more I was forced to acknowledge—bewilderedly, even reluctantly, for one does not easily give up a sensible explanation for an absurd one—that these texts and

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memories were genuine; that they predated the first missionaries and could not be attributed to the influence of Christianity, Islam, or postbiblical Judaism; that Ya was Yahweh and Manmasi was Menashe; and that a little-known people living in a remote part of southeast Asia had a historical link—the first demonstrable one on record—with one of the Ten Lost Tribes.

V

AND YET why not? Would it be any stranger than what we now know about the Lemba?

Actually, the case of the Mizo is less strange, since it is easier to account for a migration from the eastern Mediterranean to southeast Asia than for one to southern Africa. Not even our present-day biblical minimalists, who accuse the Bible of exaggeration, and maintain that most of the Ten Tribes remained in Palestine after the Assyrian conquest and eventually became Samaritans, Christians, and Muslims, can deny that Israelites *were* deported northward and eastward after the destruction of the kingdom of Samaria. We know this from Assyrian records, which speak of 27,290 deportees in 722 B.C.E. alone.

Such population transfers, in which the exiles were allowed to retain their ethnic and religious identity, were standard policy in the Assyrian empire, which stretched to the Zagros mountains of Iran. Moreover, when Assyria fell in the 7th century to the Babylonians, who in turn were swallowed by the Persians in the 6th, the empire's borders were extended as far east as present-day Afghanistan, and merchants and nomads moved safely within them along well-traveled routes. Although this tells us nothing about the fate of the Israelites, there is no reason why some of them could not have reached the gates of India within a historically short time. Alexander the Great did it from Greece in seven years, fighting most of the way, and until fairly recently there were Afghani Muslim tribes with clear traditions of descending from the *beni isra'il* or "sons of Israel," by which they did not mean the later *yahud* or Jews.

There is in fact some oral evidence linking the Manassite strand in Mizo history with both eastern Afghanistan and the southernmost of the northern silk routes, which skirted the Takla Makan desert while hugging the base of the Tibetan plateau. And it was presumably from this plateau, or from the Himalayan foothills to the east of it, that, some time during the first millennium C.E., the Mizo people began the southward migration that brought them to the Chindwin River valley of Burma and, from there, westward into the hills they now inhabit. Exactly how, when, and where they met and incorporated the Manassites, some of whose beliefs and customs fused with their own, does not seem to me at the moment determinable. But it did, I believe, happen.

Jewish history knows nothing of such an event. Why should it? If the Manassites (as appears to be the case) soon lost touch with their fellow Israelites, they would simply have disappeared beyond the horizon as did most or all of the other deportees. There is no way of knowing how long they might have preserved a clear memory of their own traditions; as far as those embedded in the old Mizo religion and culture can be reconstructed, they do not add up to a coherent narrative. Rather, it was Jewish memory that, in a more general sense, preserved the deportees in the form of legends about the Ten Tribes that became an essential part of Jewish folklore.

Vague, confused, and romanticized, these legends sometimes located the tribes beyond "the River Sambation" or "the Mountains of Darkness" and sometimes in real places like Ethiopia, Arabia, and India. In some cases they were pure figments of the imagination; in others, they were inspired by distant rumors of Jews like the Khazars, the Falashas, or the Beni Israel of India's west coast who lived "free of the yoke of the gentiles." And perhaps they also reflected the chance encounters of Jewish travelers with groups similar to the Lemba or the Manassites, errant bodies spun out of Jewish orbit entirely. Why should these two have been the only ones?

All that can be said for a certainty—and this, too, must be pieced together from tantalizing bits of ancient, medieval, and early modern accounts—is that more varieties of Jews once existed in more far-flung places than have been seriously reckoned with. There is reliable testimony from the 15th century to a colony of Jewish merchants in West Africa, near the headwaters of the Niger; to Jews throughout the Tartar and Mongol kingdoms of Central Asia; to Jews all over China. There is a remarkable passage by Rustichello of Pisa, the "as-told-to" author of *The Travels of Marco Polo*, that appears to have escaped the attention of Jewish historians altogether. It tells how,

> when Messer Maffeo, Marco's uncle, and Messer Marco himself were in the city of Fu-Chau, there was in their company a certain Saracen who spoke to them as follows: "In such-and-

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> such a place there is a community whose religion nobody knows. It is evidently not idolatrous, since they keep no idols. They do not worship fire. They do not profess Mahomet. And they do not appear to observe the Christian order. I suggest that we should go and have a talk with them."

Marco Polo and his uncle did just that. At first, writes Rustichello, the members of this mysterious community were reluctant to talk,

> for they were afraid that their visitors had been sent by the Great Khan to make this investigation in order to get them into trouble. But Maffeo and Marco attended the place so regularly day after day, familiarizing themselves with these people and inquiring about their affairs, that they discovered that they did indeed hold the Christian faith. For they possessed books. And Maffeo and Marco, poring over them, began to interpret the writing and translate it word by word from one language to another, till they found that they were the words of the Psalter. Then they inquired from what source they had received their faith and their rule; and their informants replied: "From our forefathers." It came out that they had in a certain temple of theirs three pictures representing three apostles of the seventy who went through the world preaching. And they declared that it was these three who had instructed their ancestors in this faith long ago, and that it had been preserved among them for 700 years; but for a long time they had been without teaching, so that they were ignorant of the cardinal doctrines.

Convinced they were dealing with ignorant Christians, the two Italians proposed informing the Great Khan. Rustichello's account concludes:

> [And] the Great Khan ordered that they should be granted privileges whereby they should be acknowledged as Christians, and the status accorded to Christians should be applicable to all who professed their rule. And it was found that throughout the province of Manzi, here and there, there were more than 700,000 households who adhered to this rule.

The seaport of Fouchou still exists in Fukien, one of the nine provinces of Marco Polo's "Manzi," a term used by him to refer to all of southern China up to the Yangtze River, which divided it from "Cathay" to the north. (Kaifeng, historically the best-known Chinese Jewish community, was in Cathay.) Whether or not "700,000 households"—three million souls or more!—is an exaggeration, it is probable that Marco Polo (who mentions elsewhere meeting Jews in Beijing and Hangzhou) was unknowingly conversing not with Christians but Jews in an advanced stage of amnesia. Why else would they have possessed a book of Psalms while denying that they were Christians, a tolerated and successful religion in China at the time? Who but the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could their "three apostles" have been? For what other reason would they have remembered them and not Jesus?

Indeed, just as it is a historical fact that Jews were the trailblazers of monotheism throughout the Mediterranean world and the Arabian peninsula, paving the way for a Christianity and Islam that displaced them, the same may have been the case in much of Asia. The difference perhaps was that in Asia, far beyond the periphery of rabbinic control and creativity, Jewish communities that lost the exclusive copyright on monotheism lapsed into a religious stagnation that spelled their extinction.

VI

Can genetics tell us more about such matters? Undoubtedly it can, but only if given firm guidelines. It is hardly practicable to sample the world's billions randomly for Jewish Y chromosomes and mitochondrial DNA, and hardly sensible to do so with every population currently claiming Jewish roots. Even when specific targets are pinpointed, the statistical complications could be insuperable. The Mizo, for instance, have been divided historically into warring endogamous clans, not all of whom would necessarily carry Jewish genes even if some did. And where are the needles of such genes to be looked for in, say, the haystack of southern China? The money might be better spent on curing diseases and improving rice strains.

Already, however, the new Jewish genetic studies have added significantly to our knowledge. If their conclusions appear both revolutionary and conservative, this is because in both cases they are telling us that traditions need to be taken seriously; that old legends may have kernels of truth; and that a critical attitude toward them demands, first of all, resisting the temptation to dismiss them out of hand. This is good news, because it means that Jewish history is still full of wonder.

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OBSERVATIONS

Groucho & Julius

John Podhoretz

ALTHOUGH THE unlikeliest-seeming of theater critics, the Danish existentialist philosopher Søren Kierkegaard was responsible for some of the most penetrating observations about the nature of acting and performance this side of Aristotle. "The actor's art is one of deceiving; the art is the deception," Kierkegaard wrote in *Works of Love* (1847). And for this reason, he continued, "It is the pinnacle of art when the actor becomes one with what he represents, because it is the pinnacle of deception."

Has any performer ever become "one with what he represents" more completely than Julius Henry Marx? Over the course of two decades in vaudeville, he slowly developed a comic character named Groucho that he would eventually end up playing for more than 50 years until his death in August 1977. He was assigned this stage name one night in 1914 in Galesburg, Illinois by a fellow vaudevillian, either because of his dour expression or because he carried the family "grouch bag" where he and his three brothers deposited the cash they were earning. By a similar process, his skirt-chasing brother Leonard would be dubbed Chicko (later amended to Chico), Adolph the harp player became Harpo, and Herbert, the youngest and least of them, Zeppo. A fifth brother, Gummo, had left the act in 1915 because he stuttered.

In 1924, the Four Marx Brothers appeared on Broadway in a revue, *I'll Say She Is*, that caused a sensation and turned them into the toast of the Algonquin Round Table. The playbill listed their proper first names—the last moment when any public separation existed between Julius Marx the person and Groucho Marx the character. Thereafter, he was Groucho when he was on stage or screen and he was Groucho when he woke up in the morning and when he went to bed at night. As time went by, even his brothers ceased to call him "Julius" or "Julie," and he in turn no longer called them by their given names. And in a very real sense, there *was* no more Julius Henry Marx.

Though the reputation of the Marx Brothers still rests primarily on the six great motion-picture comedies they made between 1929 and 1935 (*Cocoanuts*, *Animal Crackers*, *Monkey Business*, *Horse Feathers*, *Duck Soup*, and *A Night at the Opera*), the most famous stories about Groucho concern his conduct not on the silver screen but in the real world. Told he could not enter a restricted swimming club with his daughter in tow, he protested that, since the little girl was only half-Jewish, maybe she could be allowed to enter the pool up to her knees. In 1951, when Cecil B. DeMille eagerly solicited the comedian's opinion of his new film, *Samson and Delilah*, starring Hedy Lamarr and the bodybuilder Victor Mature, Groucho replied, "You've got the roles reversed. Victor Mature has bigger ——."

For a story he often told to suggest that he had *always* been Groucho, the self-regarding solipsist and truth-teller, he even dipped back into his penurious youth in New York. At the age of twelve, it seems, he had taken the prettiest girl on East 93rd Street to Hammerstein's Victoria Vaudeville theater in Times

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Square. "I had 70 cents saved up and I had it all measured out," he wrote in his 1959 autobiography, *Groucho and Me*. "Two tickets in the second balcony, 50 cents . . . carfare both ways, 20 cents . . . total: 70 cents." But then the girl asked him to buy her a bag of coconut candy for a nickel.

"I did what every sucker has done all his life when beauty demands something," he recalled, still miffed 60 years later that she would not even offer him a piece. ("Perhaps she assumed I had diabetes.") When the two emerged from the theater, a snowstorm was raging, but the boy had only a single nickel left for carfare to make the three-mile trip home. He offered to flip her for it. She called heads, it was tails, and, as he told a convulsed crowd at a Carnegie Hall appearance in 1972, "She walked all the way back to 93rd Street."

Is the story true? It certainly sounds like Groucho, who employed the sensibility and style of a clever and obnoxious twelve-year-old into his old age. But those were the demands of his *role*, the role of a lifetime, one of the great roles of the 20th century—a role that, given its seductiveness, Julius Marx felt compelled to play at every waking moment. Ultimately, it does not matter whether the coin-flipping story is true or not—any more than it matters whether Groucho actually said at the perfect moment that he would never belong to a club that would have him for a member, or uttered any of the scores of quips he claimed to have thought up on the spot and immediately hurled at some unsuspecting burgher or doyenne.

From an early age, he had demonstrated a genius for seeming to ad-lib lines that were fully scripted, and he continued in that vein when he became a bantering quiz-show host on radio and television into his sixties. Such seeming spontaneity was key to the Groucho character—the violator of convention, the tormentor of saps and fools everywhere, the man who could say anything and do anything because he held nothing sacred but money.

WHAT A liberation that must have been for the real Julius Marx. By 1935, the comedian was forty-five and after a knockabout life had become one of the most famous people in America. Why would he not have preferred to be Groucho rather than the man he truly was: a marrier of drunkards, an obsessive worrier about debt, an overbearing father who drove his beloved daughters away? When the mask fell, he must have been among the dreariest and most characterless of men.

That is certainly the impression one gets from reading two recent books: Stefan Kanfer's *Groucho: The Life and Times of Julius Henry Marx*[1] and Simon Louvish's *Monkey Business: The Lives and Legends of the Marx Brothers*.[2] Both books are failures, but that is not entirely the fault of their authors, who do everything they can to jazz up a fairly conventional showbiz story: domineering stage mother, years of touring the Orpheum and Keith circuits on a bill with jugglers and dancers, hitting it big, suffering family difficulties and career setbacks, happy times and unhappy times, and then the final dwindle into death. Kanfer affects a tone of literary jocularity that eventually wears very thin, while Louvish is a pedant, spending pages sifting through census records to argue that the Marx family was not as poor as the brothers later claimed.

Both writers are keenly interested in the role Jewishness played in the lives of the brothers, but they do not come up with much. The father, a tailor, was Alsatian, the mother Prussian, and the family tongue was not Yiddish or German but a lowland dialect called Plattdeutsch. When Groucho began making a name for himself in vaudeville, it was as a German-dialect comedian—a role he had to surrender once World War I broke out. Unlike other successful Jewish vaudevillians like Eddie Cantor and Georgie Jessel, the Marx brothers wore their ethnicity lightly, though without shame—and Harpo became a passionate Zionist in the years before Israel's founding.

The Marx brothers were genuinely eccentric. Zeppo was a thug headed for prison as a boy, Chico one of history's most successful ladies' men and an inveterate gambler who would think nothing of selling his father's pants out from under him. Later on, the nearly illiterate Harpo (as an adult he once wrote an enraged note to someone reading, "You are ded") became a beloved member of the Manhattan literary jet set.[3]

Groucho's brothers, in fact, especially Chico and Harpo, come off as far more interesting subjects of biography than Groucho himself, just as Harpo's ghostwritten autobiography, *Harpo Speaks!*, is far superior to *Groucho and Me*, whose labored prose is borrowed so heavily from the curlicued style of Groucho's one-time screenwriter, S. J. Perelman, that it almost seems like plagiarism.

Although Groucho took great pride in the idea that he was a writer, and one whose work appeared in the *New Yorker*, Kanfer rightly points out the derivativeness of his magazine pieces, which "smacked of [the humorist] Robert Benchley, playing the much put-upon 'little man' hounded by larger forces." Without his cigar, his drawn-on moustache, and his stooped walk, he was reduced to imitating others just to find a voice. His one play, *Time for Elizabeth* (coauthored by Norman Krasna), is a highly conventional comedy, little different from other Broadway plays of the 1940's. "The Groucho of

[1] Knopf, 465 pp., $30.00.

[2] St. Martin's, 471 pp., $25.95.

[3] Neither biographer seems aware of an offhand revelation in *Young Man from the Provinces*, a fascinating memoir by Alan Heims of gay life in New York City in the 1950's and 1960's, in which Harpo is casually mentioned as a participant in the homosexual roundelay of the time. Harpo married at the age of fifty, and he and his wife adopted four children.

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Time for Elizabeth was another copy," Kanfer writes, "this time of a Broadway hack hoping to entice theater parties for a season or two."

One usually thinks of Groucho Marx not as an actor but rather as a force of nature. But an actor he most assuredly was, trapped inside a single part that eventually atrophied his character. Maybe what is so disappointing about Kanfer's and Louvish's books is that they force one to confront the essential smallness of this comic giant. "One must not be able and must not want to see the actor through the costume," Kierkegaard wrote. He might have added that many performers choose their professions because they would really rather be somebody else. Groucho Marx became his costume.

ART

Selling Norman Rockwell

Steven C. Munson

WALKING THROUGH the exhibition of paintings by the celebrated illustrator Norman Rockwell at Washington's Corcoran Gallery of Art,* one does not know whether to laugh or cry.

The exhibit consists of some 70 paintings, several drawings, and a complete set of the more than 300 *Saturday Evening Post* covers for which most of the paintings were made. Leaving the *Post* in 1963 after an association of nearly a half-century, Rockwell then produced covers for *Look* for the next ten years, and some of the paintings for these are included as well. So, too, are a few of the illustrations he did for *Boy's Life*, the official publication of the Boy Scouts, where he landed the job of art director when still in his teens.

Born in 1894 in New York City, Rockwell knew from an early age that he wanted to be an illustrator. He dropped out of school at fifteen to study at the National Academy of Design and later at the Art Students League in New York. He received his first commission—four Christmas cards—before his sixteenth birthday, and found success freelancing for a variety of publications for young people. At the age of twenty-one he moved to New Rochelle, New York, set up a studio with a cartoonist named Clyde Forsythe, and produced work for *Life*, *Literary Digest*, and *Country Gentleman*. He would later settle in Vermont and, finally and most famously, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, now home of the Norman Rockwell Museum, one of the cosponsors of the current show.

Rockwell's first *Saturday Evening Post* cover was published in 1916, when he was twenty-two. As the press release for the Corcoran exhibit puts it, winning a commission from the *Post* was "considered to be the pinnacle of achievement for an illustrator." Having reached the summit so quickly, Rockwell just as quickly figured out how to stay there: he came up with a formula for creating illustrations that remained largely unchanged until his death in 1978 at the age of eighty-four.

That formula can best be described as a pictorial equivalent, or analogue, of the kind of story-telling perfected by the *Reader's Digest*, which was finding its own recipe for extraordinary popular and financial success around the same time as Rockwell. The essence of the formula was to create a narrative image (or, in the case of the *Digest*, a style of writing) that joined a plethora of

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* The exhibit runs through September 24. It will be at the Guggenheim Museum in New York from November 7 to February 11, 2001, having previously traveled to Atlanta, Chicago, San Diego, Phoenix, and Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

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"realistic" factual detail to a sensibility that insisted that no matter what happened, all remained right with the world, and especially with the people in it. As Rockwell himself described it, "The view of life I communicate in my pictures excludes the sordid and ugly. I paint life as I would like it to be."

As it happens, his desire to depict this fantasy view of life in America dovetailed with a keen appreciation of the need, for marketing purposes, to find the lowest common denominator. "One of the most difficult problems in painting magazine covers," he wrote,

> is thinking up ideas which a majority of the readers will understand. The farmer worries about the price of milk; the housewife fusses over the drapes for the dining room; the gossip gossips about Mrs. Purdy and her high-falutin' airs. You have to think of an idea which will mean something to all of them. And it's darned hard to be universal. . . .

What Rockwell painted, of course, was not "ideas" in any strict sense but rather folksy situations that partook of minor melodrama, superficial sentiment, and humor, sometimes touched with the gentlest irony. "The commonplaces of America are to me the richest subjects in art," he said. "Commonplaces never become tiresome. It is we who become tired when we cease to be curious and appreciative."

This may sound unexceptionable, but the truth is that, having adopted an absolutely rigid process for making pictures—involving preliminary sketches that required the approval of his editors, the extensive use of props, models, and costumes, and lengthy photographic sessions—Rockwell *ruled out*, from the very beginning, any possibility of exercising real artistic curiosity or developing whatever powers of appreciation he might have had. The chief impression given by his illustrations (as by his words) is one of homespun complacency.

A good example is the cutely pretentious *Triple Self-Portrait*, which shows from behind a seated and slightly goofy-looking Rockwell, painting a huge image of his own head while looking at himself in a large mirror; tacked to the canvas he is working on, as if for the sake of a coy comparison, are small pictures of Rembrandt, Van Gogh, and a "Picasso-esque" figure. Goofiness of the endearing kind is, indeed, a recurring trait in Rockwell's characters, who also display other endearing qualities: kindness, concern, compassion, wonder, interest, highspiritedness, earnestness, piety, thoughtfulness, courage, exasperation, pride, seriousness, decency, annoyance, pleasure, exhaustion, feigned puzzlement, surprise, helpfulness, curiosity, industriousness, worry, diligence, gratitude, hopefulness, etc.

Depicting such easily recognizable traits or moods is one of the things that illustrators must be able to do, and Rockwell did it better than his contemporaries; but it is also just about all he did. That he worked very hard to perfect his skills and surpass the competition in no way alters the fact that his images were meant to appeal to readers of the *Post* in the same way that, say, greeting cards appeal, or the characters in certain types of children's books. They were supposed to make people feel good about themselves and others.

That is, no doubt, what they did when they appeared as magazine covers. But *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People* is not presented as an exhibit of the work of a technically gifted illustrator. Rather, it is presented, and has been received by many critics, as the discovery of a previously unrecognized artist of great, if not clearly specified, significance. According to one of the boosters of the Corcoran show, Rockwell may very well rank as the "most skillful portraitist painting in America in the 20th century."

Now, even taking into account the hyperbolic rhetoric routinely used these days to describe the work of artists (and filmmakers, novelists, etc.), as well as the relative dearth of great American painters, portrait or otherwise, in the century just passed, that is quite a claim. It would, I am sure, be hotly contested by, for example, admirers of Fairfield Porter, a serious representational painter whose stock has been rising in the art world since his death in 1975. But the claim for Rockwell makes little sense in any case, for he did not really paint portraits. Pictures of people, yes, but not portraits in the sense that the term is usually understood. When you paint a portrait, Henri Matisse said, you must try to put in both the rain and the sunshine—in other words, the fullest truth about the subject being portrayed. But as Rockwell himself made clear, truth, let alone of the fullest kind, was not what he was after.

AMONG THE other grandiose claims that have been entered for Rockwell as an important and vastly underappreciated artist, one is that we should consider him in the same way we consider the 19th-century French artist Honoré Daumier, who, after all, it is said, likewise worked as an illustrator (and a political cartoonist). But the two have nothing very meaningful in common.*

Daumier—who worked largely from memory—exemplified the spirit of modern drawing, helping to invent the medium as an art form in its own right. That spirit was well expressed by Eugene Delacroix, who once remarked to a student that if he wanted to be a painter, he should be able to draw a picture of a man falling from a building before he hit the ground. What Delacroix meant was that the artist had to be able to re-create, in the act of drawing or painting, the experience of the thing observed, the sensation of what it was doing (as opposed sim-

* The differences between them were, by coincidence, sharply highlighted by a marvelous exhibition of Daumier's works that was on view at the Phillips Collection in Washington from February 19 to May 14 of this year.

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ply to what it looked like). This was accomplished by seeking to capture not every detail but the essential movement of the scene, figure, or object—its gesture, to use the technical term. To the extent the artist succeeded, his work would come alive on the paper or canvas, and a viewer would respond by recognizing in himself the feeling of the experience so rendered.

Many of Daumier's cartoons never rise to this level because they were done to make a social or political point and are not realized artistically. But his best drawings, paintings, and sculptures do rise to the level of art, even great art, because they convey truths about experience that continue to interest and preoccupy us. What is most remarkable about Daumier's accomplishment—especially evident in the series of busts he did of prominent figures of his day—is that it was the result of a truly original and powerful understanding of the formal possibilities of caricature.

Rockwell, too, was a caricaturist, but of a very different kind, as the paintings at the Corcoran make painfully clear. His laboriously wrought figures, no less than the multitude of objects that surround them, feel completely artificial, frozen, ultimately lifeless. They resemble, more than anything else, dolls that have been crafted to look "real." They do not breathe, and they contain no hint of actual personality or character. And the reason is clear: these paintings were tailored to the exigencies not of art but of photomechanical reproduction.

On one or two occasions, Rockwell does achieve, if only in comparison to his own work, a somewhat arresting quality of light or a *trompe l'oeil* effect, but this result seems to have no relation to the composition as a whole, or to its comfortable message of tolerance and human goodness. As for the vast majority of the works on display, in their use of color and design they are weirdly nondescript. Some, like *The Discovery*, are garish; some, like *Tom Sawyer (Whitewashing the Fence)*, which reduces a great character from American literature to clownish innocence, falsify their subject in a truly offensive way; and some are downright repulsive—one in particular, *Christmas Homecoming*, seems a precursor of the kind of domestic scene one would later find satirized in *Mad* magazine. This is a long way from Daumier.

It is an even longer way from Vermeer, who is the subject of certainly the most farfetched claim made on Rockwell's behalf. The idea that he is the American version of the 17th-century Dutch master is apparently based on the fact that Rockwell studied Renaissance painting and tried to apply its use of perspective. But studying a master is not the same as becoming one, and none of the strained argument in support of this outlandish comparison will persuade anyone who has ever actually looked at a Vermeer.

WHAT PURPOSES, then, are being served by such claims? Crass as it may be to say so, "authoritative" statements of this kind by critics and art historians help to move the merchandise. At the Corcoran show, matters are so arranged that as you exit the last room you immediately enter a kind of bazaar—a room bathed in white light and filled with shelves displaying memorabilia of every conceivable sort, from T-shirts to picture frames, coffee mugs, books, puzzles, postcards, dolls, games, toys, and so on. Identified by a huge sign on the wall above the cash registers as "The Norman Rockwell Store," this place, with its unholy holy light, seems both continuous with the viewing experience one has just gone through and a perfect conclusion to it: a kind of commercial canonization of a museum-certified commercial artist.

The placing of such gift shops within galleries—rather than in a separate part of the museum building—is apparently a trend, one that testifies to the accelerating conflation of artistic and commercial values and the concomitant abandonment of the most basic discriminations, including the discrimination between bad and good art, or between art and illustration. This process has been under way at least since the pop-art explosion of the late 1950's and early 1960's. Indeed, more than a few commentators have drawn attention to the supposed affinities between Rockwell and Andy Warhol, who also began his career as a commercial artist. And the fact that Warhol reputedly admired Rockwell's work is now cited as *proof* of the latter's artistic merit—the question of Warhol's own merit, like that of pop art as a whole, having long ago been resolved in his, and its, favor.

In accordance with the new and greatly relaxed standards for assigning aesthetic value, one major museum after another has lately been mounting exhibitions in which what can only be described as schlock is hung next to works of genuine achievement, creating an egalitarian stew that must add to the confusion that now seems to reside in the minds of curators and viewers alike. In reviewing one such exhibit at the Guggenheim Museum, *1900: Art at the Crossroads*, the art critic Hilton Kramer wrote:

> [In this exhibition] we are earnestly invited to observe the "unexpected affinities" that are alleged to unite the philistine painters and sculptors of the Academy and their modernist opponents in some grand common purpose. As is usually the case, . . . the "unexpected affinities" are all based on subject matter and thematic motifs . . . rather than on the formal and aesthetic character of the paintings and sculptures that are falsely linked by incongruous juxtaposition. . . . Unfortunately, there is such a huge quantity of academic junk in the show that it tends

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> to overwhelm and demoralize the visitor as only large doses of inferior art can do.

By coincidence, Robert Rosenblum, the curator of the exhibit described by Kramer, is also one of the contributors to the catalogue for the Corcoran show. This is what he has to say there about his revelatory visit to the Norman Rockwell Museum in 1993:

> Inside, without the distractions of modern art, I became an instant convert . . . wondering how anybody but the most bigoted modernist could resist not only the mimetic magic of these paintings, but the no less magical way they transformed a mind-boggling abundance of tiny observations . . . into essential props for the story told. . . . Now that the battle for modern art has ended in a triumph that took place in another century, the 20th, Rockwell's work may become an indispensable part of art history. The sneering, puritanical condescension with which he was once viewed by serious art lovers can swiftly be turned into pleasure. To enjoy his unique genius, all you have to do is relax.

There is a note of belligerence, and of defensiveness, in these words: in their implication that modernism—the 20th century's great artistic achievement—can now be consigned to the historical dustbin and in the slightly ominous suggestion that, as far as art appreciation and the Rockwell show go, we should just "get over it." Another booster of *Norman Rockwell: Pictures for the American People* made the essential point much more directly when he advised visitors that "to see these paintings may require a degree of brain suspension." No one could put it more plainly than that.

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Books in Review

Puppy-Dogs' Tails

The War Against Boys:
How Misguided Feminism Is
Harming Our Young Men
by Christina Hoff Sommers
Simon & Schuster. 251 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Chester E. Finn, Jr.

WHO IS at greater risk of failing these days in our schools and in society at large—girls or boys? The answer, of course, is that, in getting a good education and growing up to become solid citizens, *both* must overcome major hurdles. For the past two decades, however, a body of research, including most prominently a 1992 study sponsored by the American Association of University Women, "How Schools Shortchange Girls," has held that girls face much deeper difficulties, while boys are part of the problem, getting the lion's share of educational resources and teachers' attention.

A few scholars have taken strong issue with this portrait, maintaining that, whatever partial validity it may once have had, it surely no longer obtains today.* In fact, in recent years, they argue, even as schools have put in place ever more vigorous measures to end the last vestiges of discrimination against girls, the tables have been turned: it is now boys who face the more formidable set of obstacles. In her new book, Christina Hoff Sommers makes the most comprehensive contribution yet to this reassessment.

Currently a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, Sommers taught philosophy for many years at Clark University and is the author of *Who Stole Feminism* (1994). She is both a careful analyst and a feisty polemicist; both talents shine through in her new book.

The War Against Boys enters three large claims. First, judged by multiple measures, our sons encounter more difficulties growing up well in today's America, and succeeding in its schools and colleges, than do our daughters.

Second, while some of the challenges that boys confront are innate (linked to heredity and chemistry) and some are embedded in troubling demographic shifts (the increased number of young men coming of age, for example, with no resident father), others arise from a culture and an educational system that are increasingly biased against them.

Third, this bias follows from the widespread acceptance of certain basic assumptions of feminism that have permeated social science, academe, the media, government, teacher-training, and more. Though the educational policies that flow from feminist premises are often said to rest upon research, in fact they are grounded almost entirely in ideology.

The upshot, according to Sommers: our nation is inhabited by millions of boys and young men whose problems go unsolved in no small part because the institutions that might be expected to address them are gripped by the belief that girls are being given short shrift. Worse, the culture at large is now striving to thwart the very boyness of these boys and young men, to redirect their masculinity, in ways that are

CHESTER E. FINN, JR. *is a John M. Olin fellow at the Manhattan Institute's Washington office and the president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.*

* See Rita Kramer's "Are Girls Shortchanged in School?," COMMENTARY, June 1992.

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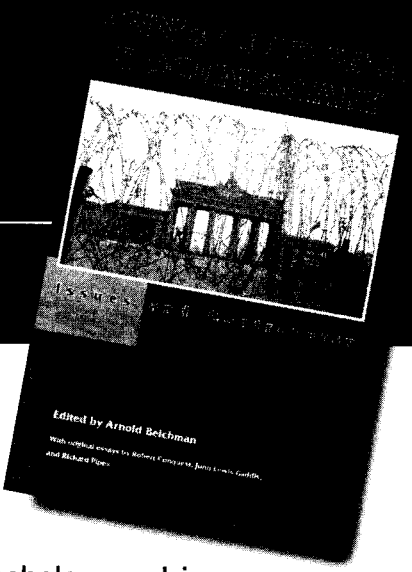
CNN'S COLD WAR DOCUMENTARY

Issues and Controversy



Arnold Beichman, editor
$17.95 paperback, 173 pages

The CNN-produced twenty-four-part television series on the cold war generated heated discussion among scholars and in the media. This incisive book—a collection of important articles, commentaries, and reviews about this CNN series—offers perspectives on both sides of the debate, including original essays by Robert Conquest, John Lewis Gaddis, and Richard Pipes.

"The best antidote there is to Turnerized world history: the volume *CNN's Cold War Documentary: Issues and Controversy.*"—*Helle Bering, editorial page editor,* Washington Times

"Beichman's book makes really powerful and much-needed points."
—*Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser to President Jimmy Carter*

"Beichman's contribution to cold war studies is critical. He has isolated the key arguments by school of thought, illuminated the actors and their influences, and provided a thorough overview. Beichman is helping reshape post–cold war studies."
—*Theodore Karasik, editor,* Russia and Eurasia Armed Forces Review Annual

"An excellent analysis of intellectual fraud, this slender volume packs a terrific punch."—*Richard V. Allen, national security adviser to President Ronald Reagan*

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harmful not only to them but to the rest of us, girls very much included.

How convincing is the case Sommers lays out? To begin with, the wide-ranging body of data she brings together does strongly suggest that American boys are in growing trouble. The most visible indicator is suicide rates. Among some 4,500 youthful (ages five to twenty-four) suicides in a typical recent year, more than five out of six were boys, and the rate has been curving up far more sharply for boys than for girls.

Things have also gone badly awry in a whole range of less dramatically shocking realms. In education, for example, federal data show that fifteen years ago, roughly the same number of boys and girls were taking Advanced Placement exams in U.S. high schools—a strong indicator of who is enrolling in the most intellectually challenging courses. By 1998, boys had fallen well behind. Boys today are less apt than girls to complete high school, to attend college, and to stay out of jail. They do less homework and come to school worse prepared. They read and write less well. Save for sports, they are less frequent participants in extracurricular activities of every sort. In those areas—like scores on math and science tests—where boys continue to hold an edge, the gap is fast narrowing. In those areas where girls are out in front, it seems to be widening.

Such data are hard to quarrel with. This, no doubt, is why so many of the claims that girls are being shortchanged rest on ever softer and more impressionistic evidence, such as the frequency with which teachers seem to call on boys and girls in class, the degree to which the two sexes get shushed when they speak out of turn, and so forth. It is also perhaps why Sommers's detractors, above all Carol Gilligan of Harvard University's school of education, have shifted the grounds of the debate. Their new contention is that, because girls possess a different moral sensibility—being more caring, empathetic, nurturing, sensitive, and community-minded than boys—they are devalued by society and discouraged from entering its most important institutions and honored vocations.

This alleged gap in "gender sensibility" lies at the heart of the hottest battle in the war against boys, a battle in which qualities long associated with masculinity—toughness, strength, competitiveness, being attuned to facts rather than feelings—have themselves come under assault. In multiple appearances on national television after the massacre at Columbine High School, the Harvard psychologist William Pollack, author of the recent *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons From the Myths of Boyhood*,* explained the violence as a response to the pressure placed on boys to conform to a macho male stereotype. According to Pollack, the only way to forestall an epidemic of Columbines is to solve the "crisis" of contemporary boyhood by changing the way boys are raised, making them kinder, gentler, more mindful of the feelings of others. In a word, they need to become less masculine.

Sommers repudiates such attempts to alter human nature as misguided and pernicious—and as more likely to increase boys' feelings of alienation and loneliness than to overcome them. Not that she is a Pollyanna when it comes to boys, or believes that they should remain in a state of nature à la *Lord of the Flies*. As the mother of two sons, she does not need to be told that boys have to be tamed, guided, and taught, not left to run free and indulge their baser impulses. But she wants to civilize them, not to feminize them—to arm them with good role models and strong, manly values. And she is right to believe that doing so can only redound

* For a discussion, see "What Are Little Boys Made Of?" by Midge Decter, COMMENTARY, December 1998.

THE STUMBLE AND RISE OF WORLD CAPITALISM

After two world wars, the Great Depression, and experiments with socialism interrupted the liberal economic order that began in the 19th century, the world economy has now returned at the very least to the level of globalization that it previously enjoyed. Capitalism has made the 20th century one of unrivaled prosperity, yet critics still fault markets for spreading instability and poverty—citing financial crises in Asia and elsewhere as evidence. These essays assess such claims, propose improvements to the international financial system, and evaluate the prospects that the recent conversion to global capitalism will be sustained. Contributors include **Deepak Lal, Julian Simon, Mario Vargas Llosa, Lawrence H. White,** and **Andrei Illarionov,** chief economic adviser to Russian president Vladimir V. Putin.

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to the benefit of society as a whole.

As matters now stand, however, feminization, and worse, are the order of the day. Boys who are obstreperous in school, or are unruly in other boyish ways, are not merely denied the extra attention they need. Instead, they are frequently medicated with behavior-modifying drugs or banished into the cul-de-sac of "special education," originally meant for disabled youngsters but now often the fate of those who merely act up. Meanwhile, the girls are learning more.

The growing catalog of indicators showing girls pulling ahead and boys encountering serious difficulties suggests that Christina Hoff Sommers has identified a problem in urgent need of redress. But to judge by the reception *The War Against Boys* has elicited so far—although respectfully treated in the daily *New York Times*, it was thrashed in the Sunday *Times Book Review* as well as in the *Washington Post*, among other places—the climate is not yet ripe for serious reconsideration. Like a number of other social scientists who have called attention to alarming trends only to be ridiculed and dismissed, and then eventually proved right, Christina Hoff Sommers appears to be well ahead of her time.

Making Waves

Broadcasting Freedom:
The Cold War Triumph
of Radio Free Europe
and Radio Liberty
by Arch Puddington

University Press of Kentucky. 382 pp. $27.50

Reviewed by
Mark Falcoff

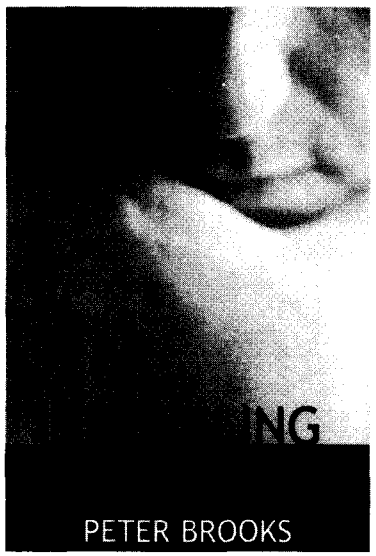
One of the truly remarkable aspects of cold-war historiography is the degree to which "revisionists"—having been proved wrong by events, and also, increasingly, by newly declassified materials from both sides of the Iron Curtain—have nonetheless maintained their prestige and credibility. The most egregious recent example of this is in the bogus history that informs CNN's *Cold War* series,* but a visit to any serious bookstore will attest to the continued industry (and imperviousness) of the revisionist camp. In this context, Arch Puddington's history of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty is especially welcome, for it reminds us that in the final analysis, the cold war was less about geopolitical rivalries than about ideas, and very fundamental ideas at that.

Broadcasting Freedom is an institutional history—Puddington served as deputy director of the New York bureau of the radios between 1985 and 1993—but none the worse for that. It is long, detailed (at times to a fault), but conscientious and, I think, scrupulously fair. It reveals some surprising twists in postwar history, taking us back to those almost inconceivably remote days when anti-Communism was a respectable, even liberal, faith. And it brings us forward through the various ups and downs of cold-war policy from "containment" and "rollback" to "détente," Ostpolitik, and, finally, the last act under President Ronald Reagan.

In speaking of "the radios," one is really talking about two very different projects. Radio Free Europe (RFE) was essentially aimed at the captive nations of Eastern Europe—particularly Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. Radio Liberty (RL), by contrast, was targeted to listeners within the Soviet Union itself. While in some ways both shared the same mission—to break through the curtain of lies, misrepresentations, and omissions that passed as "news" throughout the bloc—there

Mark Falcoff *is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.*

* See the critiques of Charles Krauthammer, Richard Pipes, Gabriel Schoenfeld, and others in Arnold Beichman, ed., *CNN's Cold War Documentary: Issues and Controversy.* Hoover Institution Press, 173 pp., $17.95.



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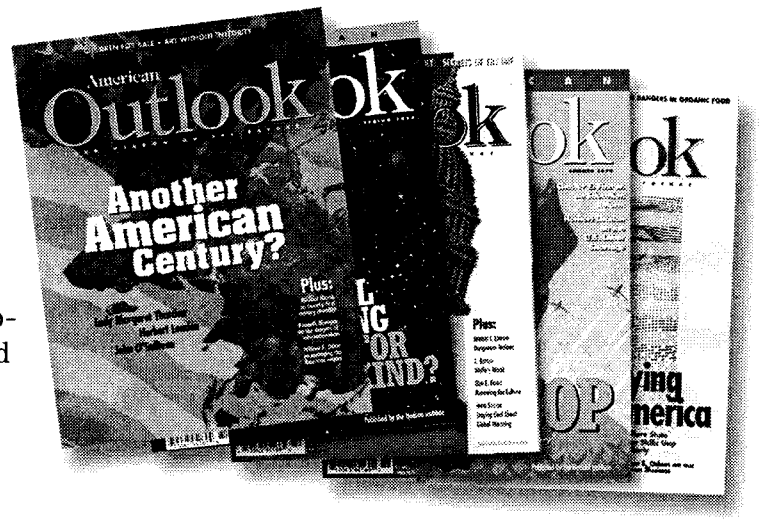

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were some important differences.

Thus, the Czech, Hungarian, and Polish frequencies were essentially alternative home services for countries that still possessed a fairly recent memory of democratic self-rule; as such, they could legitimately wrap the anti-Communist message within nationalist clothing. The frequencies aimed at the Soviet Union had a more difficult and more delicate task, which was to counteract official misrepresentations of Western societies, particularly the United States, while at the same time sidestepping the complicated question of Russian nationalism, which after World War II had fused to a degree with Soviet patriotism.

Puddington does an excellent job of reconstructing the enormous problems faced by the organizers of the radios. Financing had to be won; personnel had to be recruited, vetted, and monitored; allied countries (first, West Germany, later Spain and Portugal) had to be convinced to allow transmitters to be installed on their territory; technical troubles had to be overcome to enable programs originating in New York to be expeditiously relayed to venues close enough for broadcast to their intended audiences. As if all this were not enough, the radios had to contend with constant efforts by the Soviets, ranging from diplomatic pressure on Western allies to espionage and covert action, to shut them down.

The golden age of Radio Free Europe was the period between its establishment in 1950 and the Hungarian revolution of 1956. Ironically, in those years its adversaries on this side of the Iron Curtain came from the far Right. As Puddington reminds us, "the real debate over American foreign policy [in the 1950's] did not involve a division between Right and Left but pitted mainstream anti-Communists against ultra-anti-Communists." The former camp numbered such supporters of the radios as Edward R. Murrow, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Drew Pearson; critics included Senators Bourke Hickenlooper

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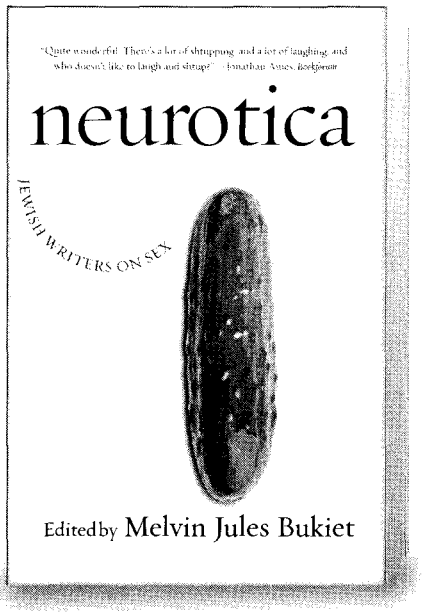

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and Herman Welker, as well as columnists like Fulton Lewis, Jr.

The bloody Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolt marked a major turning point for RFE. In the aftermath, critics were able to claim that its broadcasts had incited a people to rebellion in the false anticipation of Western intervention. But the facts of the case, as Puddington shows, were far more complicated than that, and later investigations by independent parties (the United Nations, a congressional subcommittee, the West German government, and the Council of Europe) largely absolved RFE of blame. Nonetheless, after 1956 things were never quite the same. Radio Free Europe was placed under an unprecedented degree of U.S. government oversight, and some key staffers were purged.

Meanwhile, de-Stalinization had given rise to a new mood in East-West relations, one of whose products was a policy of "constructive engagement" with the Communist governments of Eastern Europe, particularly Poland and Romania. The resultant ideological confusion, which plagued the editorial staffs of both radios, was not resolved even by the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and indeed continued well into the Nixon-Ford-Carter era, when *détente* with the Soviet Union became an objective to which all other priorities were often heedlessly sacrificed. During those years, frequencies were shut down at the request of the Soviets; several political programs were replaced with musical offerings; and broadcasts based on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* were canceled.

The war in Vietnam introduced a new wrinkle into the political environment. Senator J. William Fulbright, chairman of the foreign-relations committee, was emboldened to attack not merely our actions in Southeast Asia but the very idea of anti-Communism as an organizing principle of foreign policy, and the radios found themselves in his crosshairs. For two years, he waged a relentless campaign to shut them down. But, somewhat surprisingly, Fulbright failed to enlist any important Democrats in his crusade, and no lesser a figure than George Ball, the former Undersecretary of State turned opponent of our Vietnam policy, headed up a citizens' committee to save the radios.

The arrival of Ronald Reagan on the scene meant more money and a more assertive management; RFE director Frank Shakespeare selected George Urban, a Polish intellectual who had become a British citizen, to run the show. Urban was convinced that U.S. authorities—and, by extension, RFE itself—had become overly enamored of Eurocommunism, and even (at times) afflicted by the then-fashionable disease of "moral equivalence." Although his muscular style of management created problems within the bureaucracy and to some extent with Congress, at least it put an end to the widespread complaint of many listeners in Eastern Europe that RFE's programming had become hopelessly bland—or, as they tended to phrase it more bluntly, "something that's inoffensive to the government isn't likely to be worth tuning in."

Throughout this entire period, Radio Liberty presented special problems of its own, ones that, in Puddington's telling, were never fully resolved. The radio was staffed almost entirely by Russian émigrés, and, inasmuch as Russia had never known more than a few months of democratic government, this presented some formidable obstacles in the area of political culture. Some staff members favored the revival of the Romanov monarchy; others were openly skeptical of the value of democracy; still others were convinced of the superiority of Russian culture to all others. Another, even nastier twist: many believed that Jews (who in the 1970's would make up a disproportionate number of new émigrés) could never qualify as authentic Russians. In Russia itself, of course, these are issues that have

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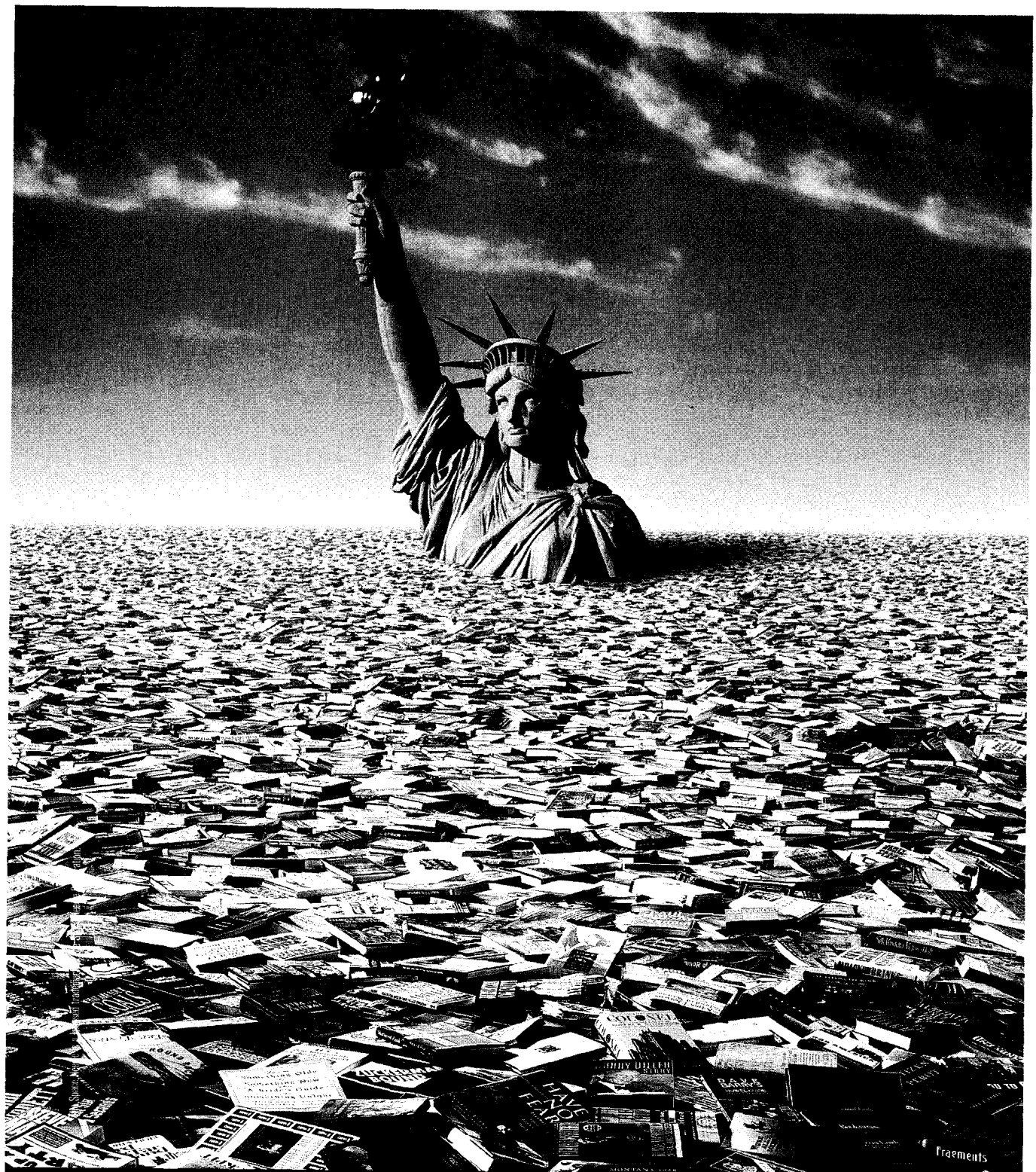

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persisted well beyond the fall of the Communist state.

Still, problems and all, one cannot but be amazed, looking back at an extraordinary half-century, by the capacity of the radios to puncture the Iron Curtain, using even such apparently apolitical products of Western culture as rock 'n' roll to undermine the morale and self-confidence of the Communist order. Considering, too, how easily the stations might have fallen prey to the worst sort of revanchist or reactionary émigrés, it is remarkable that the tone of most broadcasts—especially on RFE—was set by social democrats and liberals, who kept alive a civic culture that had been harshly extinguished by the Nazis in 1939 and been kept extinguished by the Communists thereafter.

Perhaps most impressive of all was the capacity of the radios to survive the twists and turns of American policy, which—often in spite of itself—led, after a long day, to victory. We are in Arch Puddington's debt for illustrating these and many other too-soon-forgotten matters in his finely balanced and definitive history.

Educating God

The Genesis of Justice: Ten Stories of Biblical Injustice That Led to the Ten Commandments and Modern Law
by Alan M. Dershowitz
Warner. 260 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Jonathan Marks

Alan Dershowitz, a professor of law at Harvard, is best known for defending a who's who of famous people in hot water, from Leona Helmsley to O.J. Simpson. But he is also a passionate participant in the debate over Jewish identity and the future of Judaism. In two much-discussed books, *Chutzpah* (1991) and *The Vanishing American Jew* (1997), Dershowitz has argued for an eclectic, big-tent form of Judaism, one in which secular Jews like himself are esteemed no less than their "God-centered" brethren, and in which the ritually unobservant are as comfortable as the "rule-bound" and "ritual-driven."

In calling for the creation of this "new Jewish civilization," Dershowitz has not suggested that Jews simply discard their religious past. To the contrary, he believes that Jews must continue to look to their "old books" for guidance. They should do so, however, not in the manner of the rabbis but rather by

Jonathan Marks, *a new contributor to* Commentary, *is a visiting professor of political science at James Madison College at Michigan State University.*

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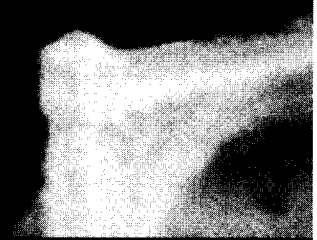

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giving the ancient texts "new meanings, contemporary interpretations, current relevance." In *The Genesis of Justice*, Dershowitz tries to make good on this idea, offering his own up-to-date view of the central events in perhaps the best-known Jewish book—Genesis—and thus providing a glimpse of what a Judaism refashioned on his terms might look like.

ACCORDING TO Dershowitz, the stories in Genesis form a "narrative prelude to the law," dramatizing episodes of injustice in order to demonstrate the universal need for "formalized legal systems." In the beginning, as Dershowitz would have it, God's rule is arbitrary and inconsistent. Thus, He tells Adam and Eve not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge—a command that "lacks apparent reason"—and threatens that if they do so, they "must die, yes die." Yet, when Adam and Eve disobey, God backs down and imposes a lighter sentence.

This softness on the first crime, Dershowitz suggests, may have encouraged Cain to slay his brother Abel. Even so, however, God shows no evidence of having learned His lesson, and allows Cain to escape serious punishment. When this laxity contributes in turn to the lawlessness of Noah's generation, God overreacts and, like a weak ruler who cannot bear the consequences of his weakness, unjustly floods the entire world. It is only afterward, Dershowitz avers, that God understands the need to issue a basic legal code—the so-called Noahide laws—to put an end to the brutish state of nature produced by His misrule and the evil impulses of human beings.

For Dershowitz, the events that follow in Genesis—the binding of Isaac, the rape of Dina, the betrayal of Joseph—illustrate still other problems of justice. More importantly, though, they point to a series of crucial, if tentative, shifts in Jewish legal thinking: from excessive punishments to more proportionate ones, from collective to individual responsibility, from ad-hoc rules and rulings to codified laws and legal processes, and finally from *hukim* (laws that require no justification) to *mishpatim* (laws based on reason and experience).

This last development is the most significant to Dershowitz, who sees Abraham as its exemplar for engaging God in "rational discourse" over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. The point of the episode, Dershowitz believes, is that Jews have a strong responsibility "to define justice in human terms," the abdication of which represents "the first step on the road to fundamentalism." They must not, in short, accept a God who refuses to answer to reason.

Needless to say, the less disputatious Abraham, the one who does not hesitate to obey God's unfathomable command to sacrifice his own son as a burnt offering, fares less well in Dershowitz's account. If the Abraham of Sodom and Gomorrah is a hero, this one is a coward, who commits a sin by "acceding to an immoral command out of fear." Indeed, by Dershowitz's lights, the autocratic, "bullying" God who issues this command can and should be rejected. "God speaks in different voices over time," he observes, and Jews may decide for themselves when they are obliged to heed Him.

THAT AN avowed secularist like Alan Dershowitz would simply choose one divine "voice" over another, or one aspect of Abraham over its seeming opposite, is unsurprising in itself. What makes it noteworthy in this instance is that Dershowitz does go out of his way to acknowledge a very different approach to the seeming inconsistencies of Genesis. As he correctly notes in his introduction, traditional commentators, too, have struggled with the book's conflicting messages. But because these commentators assume "the divine nature of the text," they devote themselves to reconciling its varied strands, invoking the classical maxim that "there are seventy faces to the Torah." Indeed, Dershowitz concludes that any other approach—and especially the modern effort to assign different authors to the parts of Genesis—is simply a cop-out, rendering the text "less interesting."

It is unfortunate that Dershowitz himself did not take this lesson to heart. For him, the traditional idea that the Torah has many "faces" is not a humble admission that we can never be confident of possessing the truth, and must therefore try to appreciate every part of God's revelation; rather, it is a dogmatic assertion that there *is* no such truth, and that whole parts of the Torah may be dismissed at will. The result is an interpretation of Genesis that, even for secularists, must be disappointing for its conventionality.

To take the most obvious example, Dershowitz's Abraham is utterly devoid of the tensions and complexities that draw us to the biblical Abraham. His Abraham is all chutzpah, no reverence, all reason, no faith, all justice, no love. Worse perhaps, while offering plenty of resistance to God, this Abraham offers no resistance to Dershowitz; he is simply a forerunner, if an imperfect one, of the modern liberal sensibility. Peering into the profundity of Genesis, Dershowitz finds—mirabile dictu—a version of himself.

When he fails to find such a reflection, his tone, predictably, becomes one of condescension. In discussing the stories of Eve, Tamar, and Dina, for instance, he declares the Bible guilty of the grave sin of "misogyny." Even God Himself, it turns out, stands to benefit from Dershowitz's moralizing. In His exchange with Abraham over Sodom and Gomorrah, God, to Dershowitz's relief, "learns" that "might alone does not make right," that "it is unjust to sweep the innocent along with the guilty," and that "the essence of justice is striking the right balance"—banalities seemingly unknown to Him previously.

It is perhaps asking too much to

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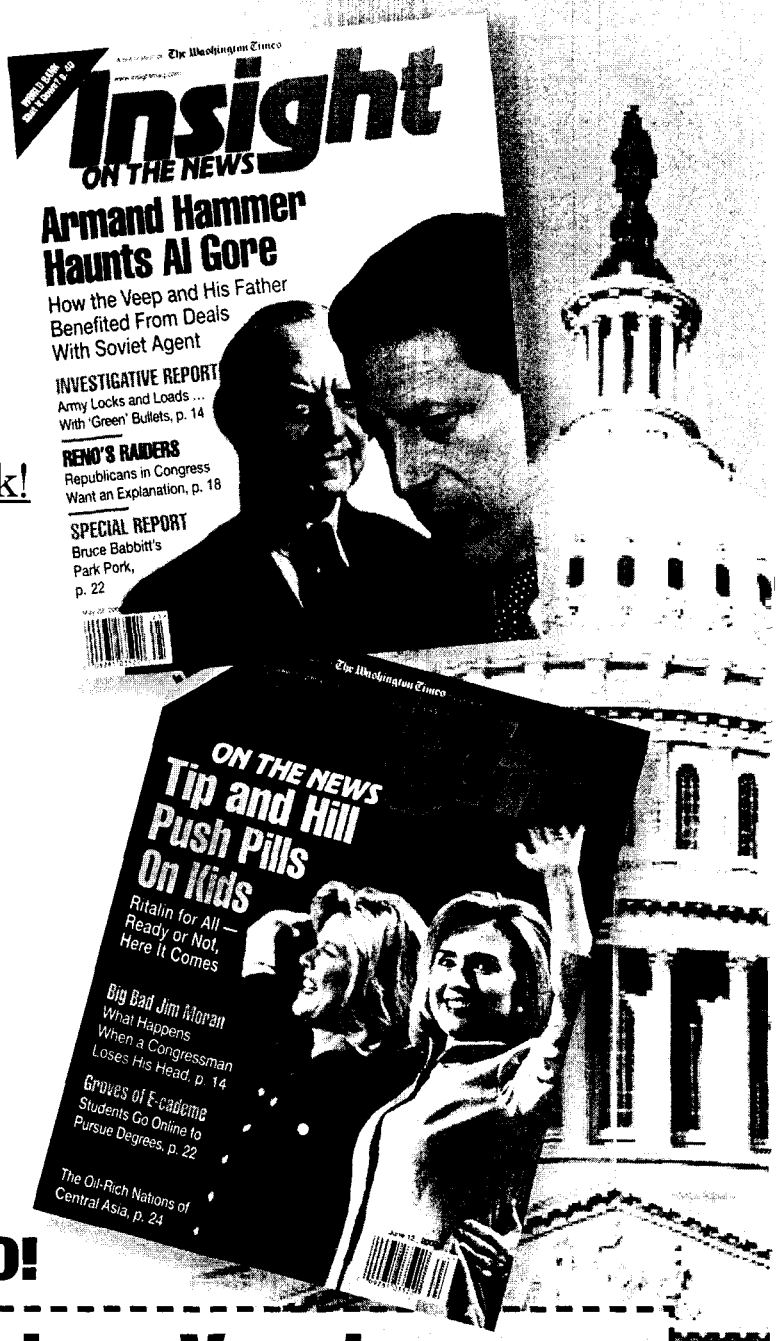

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What are the facts?

The futility of appeasement. Even though Israel (including the "West Bank" and the Golan) is barely half the size of San Bernardino County in California and would sink without trace in Lake Michigan, Israel's leaders toss chunks of it away as though the country were the size of the United States, Canada, or Russia. They do that in the futile attempt to induce the Palestinians and the other Arabs (and non-Arab Moslems) to make peace with the beleaguered Jewish state. But there will be no peace, and yielding more and more territory to those who daily in their newspapers call for the elimination of Israel is reckless and stupid.

It is almost unbelievable that a generation of Jews (or at least a significant sector of Jewish "liberal intellectuals") would not have learned anything from our horrible recent history. We must look the hard facts squarely in the eye. And those hard facts are that the Arabs (and the non-Arab Moslems) are almost single-mindedly obsessed with the destruction of Israel. Their determination to accomplish that is fully comparable to that of the Hitlerite Nazis. Those who refuse to see that or to acknowledge it are fools or at least live in a haze of wishful thinking.

Territories that have been designated as indispensable strategic assets for the defense of Israel – the Golan Heights, the Judean-Samarian Mountains, the Jordan Valley – are carelessly offered as appeasement presents. In fact, Israel is goaded to make such concessions by its "friends", including (it is painful to acknowledge) the Clinton Administration, for which a "Mid-East Peace" would be a foreign policy triumph.

Is Israeli territory not sacred? The Arabs consider every inch of their territory as "sacred Arab soil". Mr. Sadat, Egypt's president at the time, was handed the vast Sinai Peninsula – with its oil fields developed by the Israelis, its sophisticated military installations, and its burgeoning cities – on a silver platter. He then went to the World Court to sue Israel for Taba – one disputed square mile that he could not bear to abandon to the hated Jews. The sainted King Hussein of Jordan insisted on a "border modification" involving a few acres of land before he would deign to sign a peace treaty with Israel. The late unlamented Hafez Assad of Syria was literally begged to accept a present of the entire Golan Heights, in return for granting "peace" to Israel. But he walked away from the deal because it did not include a strip of shoreline on the Sea of Galilee – again, "sacred Arab soil". It is only the Israeli Jews, to whom no part of their country appears to be sacred, who carelessly and indifferently toss away chunks of their very small patrimony. You may be sure that a good portion of Jerusalem, once thought of as the "eternal indivisible capital of Israel", will be the next peace offering.

> "Israel would be foolish to make any territorial concessions at all until it can be convinced that all Arab and Moslem countries have forsworn their enmity of Israel and their desire to wipe it off the map."

What Israel is expected to do – to reward those who have invaded it (for the purpose of destroying it) with territorial gifts – is unprecedented in the history of the world. Nobody has ever suggested that the French return Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, the Czechs the Sudetenland, or the Poles the vast swatches of Eastern Germany that they received after World War II. The Russians laugh at the suggestion that they should return to Japan the islands they snatched from them in the last weeks of World War II. It is only Israel that is expected to bring such "sacrifices for peace", a bizarre term that has been coined specifically for application to this proposed outrage.

Only fools and wishful thinkers will believe that making such "sacrifices" will bring peace even one step closer. On the contrary, the more Israel allows itself to be weakened by yielding strategic assets, the more likely are the Arabs to be encouraged to launch the war for which they are so feverishly preparing and to attempt to finish off the Jewish State (an intolerable thorn in their side) once and for all.

Peace can only come about by a fundamental mind change by the Arabs, a sincere desire to live in peace and hoped-for prosperity with Israel. But that is not in the cards. Arab publications feature the most outrageous stories and caricatures about Israel and about Jews. Schoolchildren in Arab countries, including those under the Palestinian Authority, are taught that the Jews are devils, must be destroyed, and that "all of Palestine" (and we know what that means) must be recovered. Israel would be foolish to make any territorial concessions at all until it can be convinced that all Arab and Moslem countries have forsworn their enmity of Israel and their desire to wipe it off the map. That may take a little while. It certainly cannot be hastened by giving away big chunks of the country.

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think that a close reading of Genesis would have prompted Alan Dershowitz to set aside modern liberal and feminist orthodoxy in order to consider the Jewish tradition's view of the relationship between men and women, or that it would have shaken his self-satisfaction long enough to prompt thoughts of what he might learn from Abraham's trust in God, Whose actions in the Bible suggest that human reason alone—Dershowitz's god—is a far from sufficient guide. Without such serious reflection, however, it is hard to see why Genesis is worth bothering with in the first place.

After all, if one is interested in the general advantages of the rule of law, there are certainly better books to read. The point of Genesis is rather to explain the need for God's Law, the revelation of which is the main event of the next great book of the Bible. But somehow one doubts that this central and defining aspect of the Jewish past can be reconciled so easily with the pieties of Dershowitz's "new Jewish civilization."

Heretic

How I Accidentally Joined the Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy (and Found Inner Peace)
by Harry Stein
Delacorte. 274 pp. $23.95

Reviewed by
Ronald Radosh

HARRY STEIN is a well-known author and journalist who wrote a column on ethics for *Esquire* in the 1970's, has appeared regularly in *TV Guide*, and has contributed frequently to the *New York Times Magazine*, *GQ*, and *Playboy*. But in this funny/serious book he offers a rather different description of the arc of his career: he is, he writes, "a writer and journalist whose work has appeared in a number of publications in which he will likely never appear again."

Why not? As he tells the story, it may all have begun the day his wife Priscilla—an American blueblood whose ancestors came over on the *Mayflower*, and an erstwhile feminist—brought home a copy of COMMENTARY. Stein's response was immediate: "I don't want this around the kids!" After all, he himself was then still a typical right-thinking "progressive" with solid red-diaper-baby credentials, whereas COMMENTARY's editor, Norman Podhoretz, was "an individual as despised in my longtime circle as

RONALD RADOSH *is the author of a memoir,* Commies: A Journey Through the Old Left, the New Left, and the Leftover Left, *to be published this winter by Encounter Books.*

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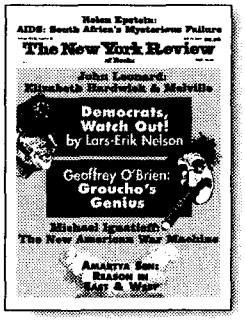

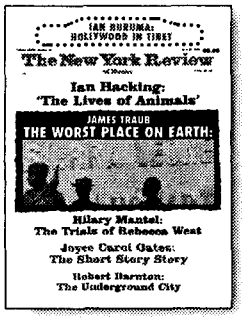

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Jesse Helms." Nevertheless, he read the issue that evening, was forced to admit that it "was as smart and thoughtful—as *challenging*—as anything I'd read in a long time," and thereby embarked on his transformation into the "social conservative" he considers himself today.

Or perhaps the story really began earlier, with the birth of Stein's first child in 1981. (As chance would have it, my wife and I were in the same natural-childbirth class on Manhattan's Upper West Side as Harry and Priscilla Stein, though we did not get to know each other.) After the birth, his wife informed him that she was quitting her job and opting for the joys of at-home motherhood. If he was shocked, his friends were aghast; one actually chastised him for remaining in "an old-fashioned family."

A decade later, matters had progressed significantly. Soon after Vice President Dan Quayle's notorious 1992 speech criticizing the TV character Murphy Brown for choosing to become an unwed mother, Stein found himself at a dinner party. He took what he thought was a safe middle course. "Quayle may have had a point," he remembers having said, suggesting to his dinner partners that parents should think harder about the consequences of their actions while also making it clear that he abhorred Quayle's "indifference to those at the bottom rung of the social ladder." But the ruse failed. One of his journalist friends turned red and, "literally sputtering," demanded: "Jesus Christ, when did you become a fascist?!"

Remarks like these, Stein now knows, are a hallmark of the political Left's "unshakable sense of its own virtue," and also the source of its emotional power over those who have grown up or have sojourned for any length of time in its precincts. How he shook free of that power, and slowly came to grips with the "sobering truth that the version of the story I grew up with was woefully incomplete," is the burden of this book, which artfully interspersed personal stories from his family life and his intellectual career with sharp and incisive commentary on the major social changes of our times. Stein's passages on the nature of political correctness in the academy, the pitfalls of the feminist movement, the cult of victimization, the shabbiness of political coverage by the mass media, and the ever-present anti-Americanism in the culture may go over familiar ground, but they do so with skill, humor, and unfailing interest.

Stein is not alone in the path he has taken. Many of us who started out at the same time and in the same place ended up realizing, like him, that the views of people we had instinctively disdained as conservative or neoconservative were actually closer to our own feelings about what had gone awry in our country than the view regularly espoused in the magazines we wrote for or the circles we traveled in. But the peculiar strength of his book—what makes it essential and richly enjoyable reading—lies in the wit and verve with which Stein advances his case. In brilliantly conveying, from the inside, just *how* and *why* someone like himself began to change, he also succeeds in showing how the change he underwent makes perfect sense.

One would like to think that even those who disagree with Stein would be capable of appreciating his deep powers of sarcasm and liberating humor. And they should be warned that, if exposed to his reasoning, they may not disagree for long—for, as Stein truly puts it, "once you start, the process of seriously rethinking things takes on a life of its own." If you know someone in need of his strong arguments and winning prose, or if you know someone already moving in the same direction but hesitant to take the final step, you can do them a favor by giving them this book. If you happen to be already on his side, your own enjoyment of it promises to be unalloyed.

Do-Gooders

The Warren Court and American Politics
by Lucas A. Powe, Jr.
Harvard. 584 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Franklin Hunt

With the passage of almost a half-century since Earl Warren became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, it is easy to forget the breadth of the constitutional transformation over which he presided. During Warren's tenure, from 1953 to 1969, the Court overruled 45 prior decisions, half as many as it had reversed in its entire previous history. In cases whose names were once household words, the Justices overturned racial segregation (*Brown* v. *Board of Education*, *Cooper* v. *Aaron*), demanded the reapportionment of legislative and congressional districts according to the principle of "one person, one vote" (*Baker* v. *Carr*, *Reynolds* v. *Sims*, *Wesberry* v. *Sanders*), prohibited prayer in the public schools (*Engel* v. *Vitale*), made it almost impossible for a public figure to bring a libel action (*New York Times* v. *Sullivan*), and created both a right of marital privacy (*Griswold* v. *Connecticut*) and expansive procedural rights for criminal defendants (*Mapp* v. *Ohio*, *Miranda* v. *Arizona*). For good measure, if less famously, Warren and his colleagues also scuttled the government's anti-Communist domestic-security system, issued broad new rights for political demonstrators, and virtually eliminated the censorship of obscenity.

In his new book, Lucas Powe, a professor of law and government at the University of Texas, provides a vivid and well-informed account of this tumultuous period on the Court. As he shows, the "revolution" start-

Franklin Hunt *practices law in New York City and has written for* Commentary *and a number of legal journals.*

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ed immediately with *Brown* (1954), was stop-and-go for nearly a decade, and then picked up speed with the retirement in 1962 of Justice Felix Frankfurter, Warren's chief adversary on the Court. But Powe does not simply rehearse the particulars of the era's best-known cases. Drawing upon a voluminous body of scholarship on the Warren Court, he tries to explain *why* the Justices did what they did—an exercise that, despite Powe's own liberal sympathies, sheds a remarkably harsh light on the methods and attitudes of postwar American liberalism.

AS POWE observes, the most controversial decisions of the Warren Court are now usually justified in terms of one or another legal doctrine. In the eyes of many law professors, the Justices were simply implementing the famous "footnote four" of *United States* v. *Carolene Products* (1938), an aside in which Justice Harlan Fiske Stone had proclaimed that the Court should give exacting scrutiny to laws that adversely affected either the democratic process itself or the interests of "discrete and insular minorities." According to other students of the Warren Court, the Justices themselves furnished, or invented, sufficient legal rationale for their rulings, pointing as they often did to new readings of the Constitution's "equal protection" clause or to various unenumerated "fundamental rights," including those found, in Justice William O. Douglas's renowned phrase, in "the penumbras, formed by emanations" from the Bill of Rights.

For his part, however, Powe doubts that "footnote four" or any other legal principle mattered much to the Court's liberal Justices. As he sees it, the Court's motivations were clearly political. Warren and his allies on the bench represented what Powe calls the "purest strain" of Kennedy-Johnson liberalism, understanding themselves to be full partners of a Congress and executive branch working aggressively to impose a particular set of enlightened values. The Justices' aim was not to apply the Constitution but rather, in the spirit of the 1960's, to do good.

What most impresses Powe is the political skill with which the Warren Court pursued its vision. As he points out, the Justices appealed not just to the country's well-educated elite but also to those groups, especially blacks in the South and the big cities, who found themselves newly empowered by rulings that reconfigured local politics. No less important to the Court's success, Powe argues, was its ability to isolate those who disagreed with it, making any advocate of judicial restraint or federalism appear to be a sympathizer of racists, John Birchers, and religious zealots.

Powe admits that he once "worshipped" the Warren Court. This is no longer so—he dislikes, for instance, the mathematical pedantry of the legislative-reapportionment cases and the damage to privacy and reputation caused by the new standard for libel. But plainly he still counts himself among the Court's admirers. For him, the worthy aim of the Justices was to bring the country's "ignorant outliers"—the white South, rural communities, areas dominated by Roman Catholics—into the national mainstream. Overcoming the traditional reserve of the judicial branch, Warren and his allies waged, in Powe's view, a brilliant campaign against a range of prejudices and practices that were simply "out of place" in modern America.

SUCH CELEBRATION of the Warren Court is nothing new, of course, but Powe's version is refreshing in its candor. Unlike those law professors who have struggled since the 1960's to provide a *constitutional* rationale for the Court's liberal activism, Powe recognizes that Earl Warren, a former governor of California, was a deeply political creature, and had little regard for the niceties of constitutional law. To the contrary, and just as critics have long maintained, the opinions of the Warren Court were generally just a cover for the Justices' politics, an effort to give their views some constitutional plausibility when read against the rigorous dissents of Justices Frankfurter and John Marshall Harlan.

Remarkably, Powe is not much disturbed by this partisanship masquerading as law. For him, as for most liberals, it is enough that the changes sought were "advances" for the country; the means by which they were achieved mattered little by comparison. Powe thus cites with approval the reverential—and astonishingly antidemocratic—words of Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times*, who proclaimed the Warren Court a "second American Constitutional Convention." And he treats as a quaint and amusing conceit the notion that, according to the Constitution, the controversies into which the Justices waded so deeply during the 1950's and 60's should have been handled in the political arena.

Powe acknowledges that, despite the obvious popularity of some of the Warren Court's rulings (especially on race), many others have not fared so well with the public. But, by confining himself to the Warren years, he does not go nearly far enough in recognizing what this has meant for American politics. On matters like obscenity, criminal procedure, the "right" to privacy, and church-state relations, the decisions of the Warren Court—and its later judicial progeny—continue to spark bitter debate. Predictably, the country's "ignorant outliers," as Powe chooses to label a broad swath of his fellow citizens, have not quietly disappeared from the scene. As a result, legitimate differences of opinion that might have been softened over time by the usual delays and compromises of the democratic process have instead been transformed into lasting divides, with no resolution in sight.

In a wider historical sense, the

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chief casualty of the Warren Court has been the practice of good-faith constitutionalism. After the ferocious judicial battles of the New Deal, a rough consensus had emerged: the Supreme Court, it was thought, should leave most political and economic disputes to the elected branches of government, confining itself to those fundamental questions clearly addressed by the Constitution. For Warren and his colleagues, convinced as they were of the rightness of their agenda, this modest role was not enough, and the Court entered the fray as never before.

Today, the Supreme Court tends to be more cautious. In recent years, we have even seen the Justices restore a number of older constitutional understandings, especially in their effort to breathe new life into the principles of American federalism. Unfortunately, every interpretation of our fundamental law, however well grounded in text and history, is now almost universally viewed as politics by other means—an atmosphere of constitutional cynicism that is perhaps the most important legacy of the Warren Court so admiringly described by Lucas Powe.

I Have a Dream

Creating Equal: My Fight Against Race Preferences
by Ward Connerly
Encounter. 286 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

Ward Connerly was born in 1939 and spent the first five years of his life as a black boy in segregated Leesville, Louisiana. The death of his mother, and his father's

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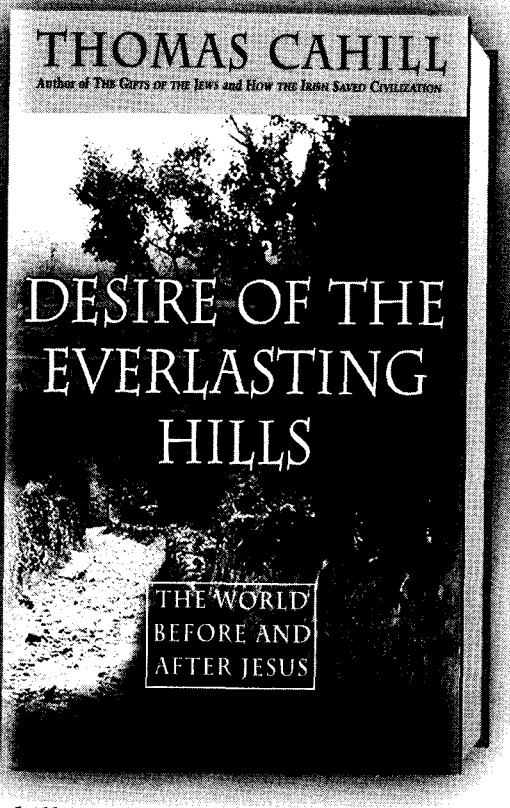
Dan Seligman *is a contributing editor of* Forbes.

From the author of *The Gifts of the Jews*

Thomas Cahill looks at Jesus—a Jewish reformer in a Roman world.



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apparent desertion, soon sent him to the West Coast, where he was raised by an aunt, uncle, and grandmother—all of them quite uneducated. Not exactly a promising beginning, and certainly not the start one would expect for someone who would go on to be a wealthy businessman and a national political figure.

But what makes Connerly's new memoir still more absorbing is what he has done with his prominence. A major player in helping to overturn affirmative-action policies during the 1990's, he remains perhaps the country's most visible spokesman against racial preferences—a distinction that has come at no small personal price.

Long before he became self-consciously political, Ward Connerly was something of an instinctive conservative. While a student at Sacramento State and early in his working life, he drew mainly "liberal" conclusions from the racial injustices that he saw in America, and was thrilled by the early successes of the civil-rights movement. But, as he writes here, he reacted with feelings of rage and betrayal when black nationalism, not to mention Black Pantherism, took center stage later in the 1960's. Meanwhile, his own success working for the housing department of the state of California left him feeling that he was "living day by day inside Martin Luther King's dream."

By this time, Connerly had become an acknowledged expert on the state's housing laws—and the friend of a rising star in the California GOP named Pete Wilson. Connerly himself soon registered as a Republican, and in 1973 he and his wife started a consulting firm to advise companies and communities trying to navigate their way through the maze of government housing regulations. The firm struggled at first, but ultimately turned into a very profitable enterprise.

The degree, if any, to which this success can be attributed to Connerly's political connections is not something he addresses, but his long association with Pete Wilson, who was elected governor in 1990, soon paid off in another way with his appointment to the powerful board of regents of the University of California (UC). There, having previously assumed that affirmative action was a minor consideration in admissions for the state-wide university system, Connerly was flabbergasted by the data he soon came to see.

It turned out that in one year alone, the UC medical school in San Diego had rejected 50 applicants who had better academic qualifications than the *best* student admitted under affirmative action. The UC campuses at Davis, Irvine, and San Diego had been automatically accepting *every* "underrepresented minority" student who applied. The notion that race was just one of a number of factors being taken into consideration—the standard legitimized by the Supreme Court's 1978 decision in *Bakke*—crumbled before his eyes.

Within a year of his arrival on the board, Connerly reports, he had become known as a troublemaker. In July 1995, he led a majority of the regents in voting to end racial preferences in the university's employment, contracting, and admissions practices, notwithstanding the presence at the meeting of Jesse Jackson, who persuaded members on the other side of the issue to lock arms and sing "We Shall Overcome" as if they were battling Bull Connor's attack dogs.

But this was just the beginning of Connerly's activism. The decision of the board of regents was followed by, and to some extent led to, the next big earthquake in California politics—Proposition 209, which (in language borrowed from the Civil Rights Act of 1964) barred the *state* from using racial preferences in its employment decisions. Here, too, Connerly played a major role, tirelessly promoting the controversial ballot initiative. His efforts were rewarded by a decisive victory at the polls, with 54 percent of Californians supporting the proposition. The margin was even larger for a similar measure that Connerly helped to place on the ballot in Washington State two years later, and most recently he has stumped energetically for a referendum that would end racial preferences in Florida.

As Connerly recounts, the campaign against Proposition 209 was a supremely nasty affair, in the course of which he himself was singled out as a supposed traitor to his race. "I doubt that any other contemporary black person with the exception of Clarence Thomas," he writes, "has ever faced the kind of abuse that I took in 1996." A profile that appeared a year later in the *New York Times* quoted one of his cousins as saying that Connerly's aim was to "bring down black people and forget his own blackness." A California state senator took a different but no less malicious tack, telling the *Los Angeles Times* that "Connerly wants to be white" and "that's why he married a white woman."

Anecdotes sprinkled throughout the book suggest how painful it is to Connerly that many blacks continue to view him as, in the inescapable cliché, an "oreo": black on the outside, white on the inside. An arresting footnote to this ugly attitude is the fact that despite his appearance, Connerly's ancestry is in fact half or more white, via Irish and French-Canadian forebears.

Connerly has also been accused of hypocrisy for warring against affirmative action while allegedly having taken advantage of it to get ahead. Here again the truth is complicated. Racial preferences clearly played no part in his education or the launching of his career, but his fateful appointment to the UC board of regents did indeed come about—as Connerly later learned to his dismay—because of pressure on Governor Wilson to promote "diversity." There is a delicious irony

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in this, since Connerly would not have gotten the job but for the taken-for-granted view that somebody with his skin color could be counted on *not* to rock the affirmative-action boat.

FROM A wider angle, what is most striking about Ward Connerly, especially in light of the abuse to which he has been subjected, is how alone he is. Among other ostensible conservatives in public life, one would be hard pressed to find anything like his principled determination. In the 1996 presidential campaign, the Dole team never could make up its mind which side the votes were on when it came to racial preferences, and dodged the issue all the way to election day. In *Creating Equal*, Connerly also recounts some maddening double-talk on the part of both George W. Bush and his brother Jeb, the governor of Florida, both of whom have professed privately to be on his side but have run for cover when asked to go public with their views. In fact, Jeb Bush has done his best to derail Connerly's antipreference referendum in Florida.

As for corporate America, a generally conservative political force in other areas, it has become passionately committed to the religion of "diversity." In response to the Washington State referendum, Boeing, Weyerhaeuser, Starbucks, Costco, and Eddie Bauer contributed huge amounts and lent strong vocal support to the "Vote No" campaign, the fundraising for which was orchestrated by none other than the father of Microsoft's Bill Gates.

In some measure, this posture reflects the calculation that supporting racial preferences is a way to win brownie points that can then be used to fight discrimination suits or to resist pressure from government quota-enforcers. But Connerly plausibly argues that more than legal tactics are involved. After years of leaning on their underlings to meet affirmative-action goals, many CEO's have come to believe in the cause—and to see it as a ticket to good-guy status in the media. As Connerly observes, however, this is "altruism on the cheap, functioning in the corporate world somewhat like wearing the appropriately colored ribbon [for, say, AIDS or breast cancer] on Academy Awards night."

Needless to say, diversity and affirmative action remain no less sacrosanct among elite journalists. Even so, at a time when the media and especially the *New York Times* have been so endlessly preoccupied with questions of race, it is remarkable that only one major paper (the *Wall Street Journal*) and no newsmagazines have elected to review Connerly's revealing book. After years of rehearsing the arguments for affirmative action, its apologists would evidently prefer to dodge a confrontation with so articulate and forceful a critic as Ward Connerly.

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Jennifer Roback Morse is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

The collapse of the communist bloc finished off Marxism as a theory of political economy. But the Marxist theory of class struggle remains, under a variety of different aliases.

Marx's original idea was that workers and capitalists necessarily engage in a struggle. The differences in their functions and interests lead inevitably to conflict, ultimately culminating in the proletarian revolution.

Classical and neoclassical economists offer an alternative view of the world: **The differences between people offer opportunities for exchange and mutual benefit.** Workers need capitalists and capitalists need workers. Needless to say, this theory of natural harmonies has a better track record than the theory of natural conflict.

In America, worker incomes are high and unemployment is low. This general rise in wealth gives lie to the Marxist claim that capitalists necessarily win their gains at the expense of workers. Indeed, many workers have become capitalists. The percentage of employees who own stock is at an all-time high. Many Silicon Valley firms give stock options to all workers, right down to the custodians.

Class conflict among social groups, however, has replaced economic class conflict (in Marxist lexicon and in practice). Activists, academics, and politicians promote these constructs: whites against nonwhites; men against women; abled against disabled; humans against the environment. Deprived of economic reasoning, radicals actively foster these divisions, and the hostilities that accompany them.

This mentality has made unfortunate inroads, even among people who have never had a Marxist inclination in their lives. The feminist version of gender conflict is particularly insidious. Everyone experiences conflict sometimes. Husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, sooner or later, somebody is going to hurt us or just get on our nerves. Feminist theory offers an all-purpose explanation for everyday discomforts: It's the patriarchy.

This knee-jerk response precludes more serious reflection on the particulars of our interactions. With few exceptions, both parties share responsibility for the condition of their relationship. Most of us, most of the time, would prefer to overlook our misbehavior and overstate the other person's. We don't want to look bad in our own eyes or in the eyes of others. We'd prefer to avoid the effort and embarrassment involved in correcting our own faults. Blaming the patriarchy provides us with a socially acceptable excuse.

When we take this bait, we inadvertently move the Marxist power struggle into our own homes, poisoning our most intimate relationships. Even worse, we miss the opportunity for personal growth that family life brings.

The theory of natural harmony applies inside the family, just as in economics. Accepting our own fallibility allows us to stand in solidarity with our equally fallible family members, rather than rejecting them as members of a hostile and alien life-form: the patriarchy.

— *Jennifer Roback Morse*

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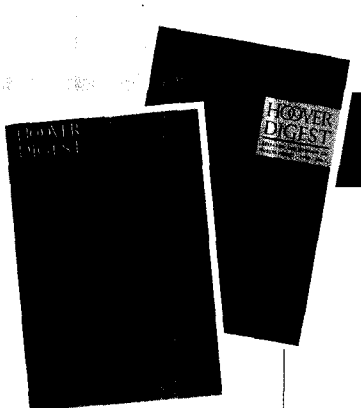

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